



# THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH & MISSION CONVENTION

— 1926 —



THE MATH  
BELUR—HOWRAH  
BENGAL



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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

This book, which is a record of the proceedings of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission Convention held in 1926, incidentally contains a general account of the achievements of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement and some useful information concerning the same. The gradual progress of the movement since its inception has been shown in Appendix III.

We convey our hearty thanks to all those who have kindly helped us in compiling this report. We are indebted to Mr. N. K. Majumdar for his gratuitous service in auditing our accounts, and also to Sj. Suresh Chandra Majumdar of the Sri Gouranga Press who has helped us in getting this report through the press. Our special thanks are due to a gentleman, who prefers to remain anonymous, for his generous contribution to the Convention Fund, but for which there would not have remained sufficient balance for the present publication.

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THE  
RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION CONVENTION  
( 1926 )  
INTRODUCTORY.

Before presenting a report of the first convention of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission it would not be out of

A Retrospect : place to write a few words by way of introduction about the time in which the Great Master appeared in India. It was a critical time in the history of the land. The degeneration of men was complete, which was accompanied by anarchy in the world of thought. As a result of the disintegration and confusion of thought that had set in, religion became but a matter of form. The violent impact of a foreign civilisation at a time when the national life-current had already been running at a low ebb, made the whole country reel, and the new knowledge of the West disturbed what faith the people had in their cultural heritage. The outlook became materialistic, and recipients of English education thought that salvation lay in blind imitation of the manners, customs, culture and institutions of the West. The religious reform movement itself was outlandish.

Such was the time of the appearance of Sri Ramakrishna, the God-man, whose life was unique and whose message universal. He struck a new note in the religious and national consciousness of India. Once more did he show that religion is realisation ; once more did he show spiritual truths as a chemical experiment is shown in the laboratory, and people understood again the meaning of

Revelation. The touch of Sri Ramakrishna transformed men. To have seen him was education; to have heard him was inspiration. His life was a great challenge to the sceptics and agnostics of the age. It was a life that illustrated and authenticated the great theme of Hindu culture, the root of which is in the Vedic age. Sri Ramakrishna did not found any sect, but only allowed a group of youthful enthusiasts to cluster round his great personality by no other law than that of soul-kinship and inward affinity. And they left all to follow him.

After the Master had passed away, this little group of his young disciples—the glorious legacy of Sri Ramakrishna to the world—set themselves earnestly to the task of perpetuating the great Ideal revealed through his teachings and manifested in his divine person, by realising it in their individual lives and by making permanent provision for its transmission to the world. Within a decade of this silent self-preparation, seven thousand miles away from the small improvised monastery at Baranagore the voice of the Master rang before a select gathering of the world's representative scholars and divines through the inspired lips of his greatest apostle. Not much unlike his Master, who used to cry out from the house-top for the young aspirants who were to come to him, Swami Vivekananda stationed himself, as it were, on the heights of modern society and proclaimed aloud to humanity the unique message of his Master. The effect produced was almost electric. After a score of centuries the message of Aryavarta was heard again in foreign lands. Right within the stronghold of modern culture and civilisation was planted the banner of the ancient Indian ideals of Spirituality and Service. Societies for the study of Hindu

culture and civilisation began to spring up. The Western hemisphere witnessed a quickening of her dormant spiritual forces, and for those who cared, there was a new light, a new life.

India too, the land of spiritual ideals, witnessed a mighty religious upheaval, which strove, on the one hand to put down all forms of meaningless conventionalism that had grown over the Hindu society by centuries of accretion, and on the other, to arrest the drift of modern educated India towards the materialistic civilisation of the West. The movement thus launched carried with it, in response to the demands of the time and conditions in India, a new enunciation of the ancient religious ideals of the land in the phrase—"Renunciation and Service." As a natural consequence, the next three decades saw the foundation of the central monastery of the Order at Belur, the inauguration of the Ramakrishna Mission, the admission and enrolment of hundreds of monastic and lay adherents, and the establishment of quite a number of centres for missionary, philanthropic and educational activities all over the country and abroad.

With the lapse of this brief but eventful space of forty years the activities of the movement had grown so complex and multifarious that many among the members both lay and monastic felt the necessity of an occasion for all to meet together to take stock of the situation, to compare notes with each other and to lay down broad principles for future guidance. This feeling found a formal and definite expression at the Extraordinary General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission, held on the 2nd June, 1925. It was at this meeting that the idea of a Convention of all

The idea originates :

members and workers of the Math and Mission was first proposed. The members present one and all enthusiastically greeted the proposal as affording them an opportunity to exchange ideas, consolidate their faith in the ideal and infuse new vigour into its practice, and further to strengthen the tie of fellowship and co-operation amongst

Sub-Committee formed : themselves. Pursuant to this a Sub-Committee was formed to collect the necessary information, and to suggest practical measures for giving effect to the resolution.

The Sub-Committee began its work by collecting the requisite information with a view to draw up a plan

The idea grows : for the proposed Convention. As matters stood, the Committee after deliberation decided to limit the scope of the Convention to those institutions only which do as a rule bear the names of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and are more or less in touch with the central Math and Mission. Accordingly it made up a list of the institutions to be invited for representation at the Convention. It will not be out of place to mention here that in pursuance of the wishes of the President and the Secretary of the Mission a few additions were subsequently made to this list. The Sub-Committee also drew up a provisional estimate of the probable expenditure to be incurred on the proposed Convention. The next item of work which the Sub-Committee took up was to draft a circular letter inviting suggestions and co-operation from all institutions concerned.

With the approval of the Mission authorities this circular was then issued to all the enlisted institutions over the signature of the President, on the 2nd August, 1925.

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When replies to the circular letter came in from quite a fair number of institutions with various suggestions and details of information, all full of enthusiastic interest and support, the Sub-Committee collated all facts, considered them together, and drew up and submitted a report with its recommendations, at the Extraordinary General Meeting held on the 2nd October, 1925. This meeting considered the report of the Sub-Committee and unanimously adopted a resolution for holding the Convention as proposed and recommended.

Reception Committee formed :

The same meeting also formed a Reception Committee in which the Sub-Committee was merged, and charged it with all arrangements in connection with the Convention to be held during the first week of April, 1926, at the Belur Math.

On the basis of the report of the Sub-Committee, the Reception Committee thus formed then issued a letter of

Letter of invitation issued :

invitation to the various institutions to send to the Secretary of the Reception Committee a report of their respective activities having special reference to several points noted by it, along with the names of persons who were likely to join the Convention as their representatives. Along with the letter a detailed programme of business for the Convention provisionally drawn up was sent.

The Reception Committee next set themselves earnestly to the more arduous and responsible task of collecting funds and other preliminary arrangements. Appeal for subscriptions towards the expenses of

Preliminary arrangements on foot : Finance.

the Convention was made to the invited institutions, and also to all members, associates, friends and sympathisers of the Mission, which was very generously responded to.\*

The problem of accommodation was a matter of no less anxiety for the Reception Committee. For, on the

Accommodation and Boarding :

one hand, the Math premises were altogether insufficient to meet the demands for accommodation of so

many representatives and guests expected to join the function, and on the other hand, there was the necessity felt to house all guests as near as possible to the Math and also to one another, in order to afford them at all hours an opportunity for pleasant social intercourse. So, spacious houses in the vicinity of the Math had to be searched for and with utmost efforts in this direction the Reception Committee succeeded in securing three separate premises close to the Math precincts. These, taken together, were as suitable to the purpose as could be expected under the circumstances, both in respect of accommodation and their proximity to the Math, and with these three houses at their disposal the management took all care to look to the comforts of the guests.

Arrangements for meals, light refreshments, tea, etc., and of special diet for those who for considerations of health and other reasons required such, were all made with much care and precision, and scarcely anything necessary was left out for the purpose of a gathering which lasted for nearly a fortnight. All arrangements for food etc. were made at the Math premises, and this gave to the representatives and all others present ample oppor-

\* An abstract statement of the income and expenditure on this account is given in an appendix at the end of this volume.

tunities to meet often and thus to enliven social intercourse and promote personal intimacy and fellowship among people coming from far and near. This undoubtedly was a feature of no mean importance in connection with the issues of the Convention.

For the sittings of the Convention a spacious pandal measuring  $100 \times 50$  ft. was set up with durbar tents on a piece of ground facing the big lawn in the east with the Ganges flowing below. The pandal was neatly decorated with simple hangings and there was little trace of pomp or gaudiness about it—any attempt at which would surely have marred the solemnity and the serious purpose of the occasion. The scene was simple yet impressive.

Close to the west of the pandal a separate matted structure was raised, neatly set with drapery, flowers and shrubs, which contained on an altar a life-size portrait of Sri Ramakrishna and two smaller ones of the Swamis Vivekananda and Brahmananda Maharaj. The portraits overlooked the audience in front and created a serene atmosphere of holy thoughts all round.

At the western corners of the pandal were set up two separate platforms, leaving between them a space to the assembly for a full view of the portraits on the altar. One of these platforms was for the President and other old and venerable Swamis of the Order, and the other, for the speakers, with a rostrum in front. Beneath and in front was spread out a big “Farâs” covering the whole space in the pandal for the audience to squat upon.

Over the platform for the speakers was hanging at the north-west corner of the pandal, a beautiful design in oil-colours, which formed at once a decoration to the

The Pandal :

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pandal and a source of information to all who assembled there during those days. It was a big map of India, with sections of the United States of America and the Federated Malay States, showing the various ramifications of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in India and abroad. The whole ground of the map was covered with a network of "creepers," all rooted at the holy feet of Sri Ramakrishna, at Belur, blooming forth in lotuses of varied stages of growth at different points—representing the various branches of the Math and Mission at different places.

By the time the Reception Committee had nearly completed the preliminary arrangements in connection

Representatives and guests pour in : with the Convention, representatives and invited guests began to pour in from all parts. The influx

began practically two weeks before, and continued right up to the early morning of the actual sitting of the Convention. During the period scarcely a day passed, on which the number of guests did not swell. Indeed, it was a sight to see and no less to feel and treasure up in one's memory, that people from different parts of the country and abroad were seen to group together in the precincts of the Math. Many were there who came after long years of absence to visit the mother Institution. Every face seemed to be beaming with joy at the prospect of the happy gathering and every heart seemed to be buoyed up with high hopes and enthusiasm for a successful issue of the Convention. The atmosphere thus created was one of intense joy and conviviality, purified by a serenity of thought and purpose which permeated every nook of the Math premises, touching all hearts and impressing all minds that happened to come and stay there during those

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few days. Some representatives and friends who could have attended the Convention from their own houses in Calcutta, stationed themselves permanently at the Math during the entire Convention week, simply for the sake of enjoying the company and breathing the sanctified atmosphere created by the occasion.

Over a hundred institutions were represented at the Convention ; and the number of representatives and guests assembled went nearly up to three hundred and fifty. The Math presented a picturesque spectacle with the ochre robes and the white dresses of the monks, Brahmachârins (novices) and lay members. Members representing the various philanthropic, educational and preaching and publication works met together for the first time. People from different provinces representing a variety of communal and social features in life speaking various languages, but all giving expression to one and the same Ideal of the spiritual life lived by Sri Ramakrishna and interpreted by Swami Vivekananda touched the imagination of all present. The various communities having very little common to them and yet uniting on a common basis of spirituality, breathing an atmosphere of toleration and love all around, proved to the most casual observer the greatness of the occasion. It was a sight which, in itself was a liberal education.

The Convention opened on the morning of the 1st April with a *Homa* and chanting of Vedic hymns and devotional songs, and continued till

After the sessions opened. the 8th. There were as a rule two sittings on all those days. The morning session was timed from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m., and the afternoon proceedings were held usually from

2-45 p.m. to 5-30 p.m. During the morning sittings an interval of half-an-hour was arranged for refreshments at 8-30. Every time the sittings were announced by a bell rung from the pandal 15 minutes before the exact time. The meetings were always opened by one or more hymns sung in praise of God, to which all present responded by a reverent silence, invoking upon the assembly the blessings of the Supreme.

With the exception of three public meetings held in this connection, the sittings of the Convention were all restricted to the representatives from different centres; other members of the Math and Mission, both monastic and lay, were allowed there as visitors only. So there was no occasion for a very crowded gathering at any of these sittings, and the audience usually came up to four hundred on the average.

The annual General Meeting of the Mission was held in the afternoon of the second day and was attended by nearly five hundred members and visitors. The first public meeting held in the afternoon of the 3rd April, was given to the exposition of the "Ideas, Ideals and Activities of the Ramakrishna Mission" and was attended by over a thousand people. We may note in passing here that by a curious irony of fate almost simultaneously with the opening of the Convention sessions at Belur, where various speakers were preaching the harmony and co-ordination of all religious sects and creeds, and urging all to foster mutual love, toleration and fellowship and unite for the grand national purpose, Calcutta on the other side of the Ganges witnessed the most unhappy beginning of the communal riots between Hindus and Mahomedans. These riots, we need scarcely mention, proved un-

doubtedly to be a serious handicap on the attendance at the public meetings held in connection with the Convention. The attendance was very much the same at the second public meeting held in the afternoon of the 5th day, in which the subject for discussion was "Religion & Philosophy in the Light of the Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda." But unhappily the meeting on the 8th of April was marked by a rather poor attendance, although it had a good deal of educative value by reason of the several special papers on useful and interesting topics presented by experts. And the reason for this was obvious for it was on this day that the riots in Calcutta reached their height.

The presence at almost all these gatherings of Miss J. Mcleod, Mrs. C. French and the Brewster family of America, who were putting up at the Guest House of the Math, and also of some Indian ladies, among whom were several members of the staff and many pupils of Sister Nivedita Girls' School, is worthy of notice in this connection. Our American sisters squatting on the ground in Indian style and watching with keen interest the proceedings of a Convention of Indian Institutions was indeed a sight disproving the dictum that

"East is East, West is West,  
And never the twain shall meet."

The story of the Convention will remain incomplete if we do not here mention the various musical and other entertainments offered, which formed a very lively and interesting part of the programme. But for them the heavy and compact programme of business fixed for the

Entertainments :

Convention would have been too much of a strain on all nerves. All available and convenient time in the intervals of the business of the Convention would be utilised in affording musical entertainments to those assembled. We may record here the parts played by the many participants in this function and the hearty appreciation they evoked from all. Prominent among them were Swami Ambikananda, a connoisseur in the art of music, and Swamis Jnaneswarananda, Tapananda, Ramananda and others. The part played by Sjt. Bhagwan Chandra Sen, a renowned player on Mridanga, who was staying at the Math during those days, is worth mentioning in this connection. The musical skill displayed by Sjt. Jnanendra Mohan Goswami, nephew of the late renowned Radhika Mohan Goswami of Murshidabad, who entertained the gathering for nearly three hours in the evening of the 6th April, also cannot be passed over without a word of appreciation here. No less absorbing was the entertainment offered by the amateur Kali Kirtan Party of Hati-bagan, Calcutta, in the afternoon of the 4th April.

In the evening of the 2nd April there was a display of gymnastic feats by the Bally Amateur Athletic Association, which offered one of the most delightful scenes, and held the spectators spell-bound for nearly four hours. In the night of the 7th April, Sjt. Murari Mohan Mookherjee, alias "Bani Babu," of Bally, was kind enough to entertain the guests at the Math with his histrionic art. All by himself he performed an entire drama and an after-piece, and with much natural grace and skill executed the various roles by quick changes of tone and mood.

These and other little entertainments arranged on the occasion helped a good deal to relax the strain put by

the Convention. We owe much to these parties for their kindness in accepting our invitation and amusing the gatherings with their performances.

A very healthy and profitable programme of instruction was furnished by the several Conversation Classes and informal meetings held by the Swamis Shivananda, Saradananda, Akhandananda, Vijnanananda, Nirmalananda and others. After the "Aratrika" and evening prayers all representatives, guests and inmates of the Math would gather round the revered Heads of the Order, and squat under the big mango tree on the main yard of the Math, to hear from them about the message of the Master, the purport of the Shâstras, the early history of the Order and a host of other interesting and enlightening topics. Query after query would be put to the surviving disciples of the Divine Master by earnest aspirants and the answers would be listened to with rapt attention. The answers were all marked by a lucidity and pointedness born of the conviction of seers and illustrated by reference to the revelations made in the life of the Great Master. Everybody present seemed to be under an hypnotic spell during these inspiring talks from the illumined souls in whom there was overflowing love for all.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE FIRST DAY OF THE CONVENTION.

At 4 o'clock in the morning twilight the bell tolled on the memorable first of April, and summoned the representatives and visitors to the opening ceremony of the Convention. The ceremony consisted of the chanting of invocatory prayers and the offering of oblations (*Homa*) to Rudra, the God of Gods, and Sakti, the Mother of the Universe, taken respectively from the *Rudrâdhyâya* of the *Sukla Yayur-Veda* and the *Devi Sukta* of the *Rig-Veda*. One *Brahmachârin* of the Order acted as the *Hotâ*, performing the ceremonies connected therewith, while about a dozen of younger monks acted as the *Sadasyas* or participants in the reciting of the hymns and prayers.

Opens with an Invocation :

The gloom of night was just melting away and the eastern sky was about to put on its attire of light, when the votaries marched in solemn silence to the pandal and took their seats forming a crescent in front of the altar. The sacred fire blazed up against the green background of the shrubs and foliage about the portrait of Sri Rama-krishna, and with it was beautifully blended the ochre of the robes of the *Sannyâsins* with sprinklings of white from the garments of the *Brahmachârins* and householders. The whole scene stood in bold relief against the surrounding grey and seemed to vie with the morning radiance of the east. Up rose the chant of Vedic hymns, which mingled at no great distance with the low murmurs of the Ganges,

and the sacred symphony agreeably broke the grave silence of the early dawn. Every mind was hushed into a serene silence, impressed, as it were, with the touch of the Divine.

At about 6 o'clock the ceremony came to a close, and after an hour's respite began the actual work of the Convention.

Thus after months of anxious and toilsome preparation approached the hour which saw the inauguration of

The First assembling : the Convention sessions. The re-

presentatives and visitors began to pour into the pandal with their faces all aglow with a certain religious fervour, eager to hear from the lips of the venerable custodians of the life-treasure of the movement, their messages to their spiritual children on this momentous occasion.

The ochre robes of the Sannyasins, and the white garments of the Brahmacharins and householders under a canopy of pale sepia made a sober combination of colours quite in harmony with the solemn proceedings that followed. It was really a sight to see and to feel. There was nothing of pomp or pageantry about it ; still it had in it a simple yet majestic beauty which struck all eyes and left its impress on every heart. Nature herself seemed eager to heighten and enliven the grandeur of the occasion—the gentle breezes fanning the assembly and the ripples on the Ganges below playing at the foot of the Math and mingling their long murmurs with the hopes and aspirations of the gathering.

Before the actual hour of commencement representatives and visitors came and took their seats in their respective enclosures. Then entered the Swami Sarada-

nanda, Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Convention, and behind him Swami Shivananda, the President, in procession with Swami Akhandananda, the present Vice-President of the Mission, and a number of other senior Sannyasins of the Order. The whole assembly rose to their feet and offered them an ovation with shouts of "Sri Guru Maharajji-ki-Jay"—"Glory unto Sri Guru Maharaj."

When the President took his seat, two voices sustained by musical accompaniments opened the meeting with a hymn in praise of Ganapati, the God of Success, and the

The proceedings open with a hymn :

whole assembly joined the strain in devout silence, which was maintained for a few minutes even after the hymn was finished. Then came the

The Chairman delivers his Address of welcome :

Address of Welcome by Swami Saradananda. As a gifted son of Sri Ramakrishna and a worthy colleague of the great Swami Vivekananda in his labours in India and abroad,—as one of the few, whom the Swamiji had specially charged with the toils and responsibilities of nurturing up the infant organisation left by him, and above all as a sturdy veteran who has all his life taken his stand in the front line in all struggles, himself fighting with one hand and directing to others the line of advance with the other hand—Swami Saradananda pointed out in clear and unambiguous terms the core, the essence, wherein lies the life and strength of the movement and sounded a note of caution in his pithy yet pregnant and forcible address.

Without any word of comment or interpretation on

the speech which stands by itself clear of all ambiguity, we present below the full text of it as read out to the assembly. We feel tempted to mention here that when he delivered his address in a distinct, impressive and sonorous voice, the whole audience seemed to be hushed into a mood of contemplation.

#### The Chairman's Address of Welcome :

It seems to be the invariable rule that every newly started movement should pass through the two stages of opposition and indifference before its principles are accepted by society and humanity at large. And as human nature is the same everywhere, we find the display of this rule alike in the East and the West. Start new ideas of reform on social, moral, political or religious lines, wherever you like, and you will find the people around you opposing them. And the more radical the ideas of your reform movement, the more vehement will be the opposition. People will say the principles of the movement will ruin the very foundation of everything that is good and useful. But if the movement has real life in it and is based on essential truths governing human nature and its various functions and activities, it will survive, grow and drive its roots gradually into men's hearts, in spite of that opposition. This opposition from outside helps the movement to concentrate its energies and bring into expression and life the fundamental truths on which it stands ; so we cannot call it bad after all.

The opposition wears away after a period and gives place to indifference, when those who opposed the movement at first begin to say that after all there is nothing so very new in it. For, have we not in such and such passages of our old records and scriptures the mention of the principles which it preaches? That is proof sufficient that our forefathers knew and carried them into practice long ago. So we need not think much of it. The movement thus spreads unhindered far and wide in this second stage and finds a secure footing in

due time by the recognition of its existence and utility by society.

So at the end of this second stage we find it accepted by a concensus of public opinion, as it were, and the ranks of its votaries, henceforth, swell speedily with its proving itself worthy of this social acceptance and recognition. But this third stage of public acceptance is not to be regarded as the millennium in the progressive career of it. For, security of position brings a relaxation of spirits and energy, and a sudden growth of extensity quickly lessens the intensity and unity of purpose that were found among the promoters of the movement. Hence in place of outside opposition we find the budding forth in it of an internal opposition due to the varied opinions of its members, and later, in place of the former spirit of sacrifice for truth, of a struggle to maintain the secure social position by compromising truth with half-truths and a clinging more to the appearance than to the spirit of things, which characterise the propensity to an easy-going existence. And if the leaders of the movement are not awake and watchful enough, or neglect to grapple the situation by finding remedies to check and stop the springing up of those evils, you can well imagine the result. First and foremost, the unifying bond of love slackens with the incoming of selfish motives, and its members losing sight of the wide outlook of the welfare and improvement of the movement as a whole, form themselves into detached groups with a view to improve and make permanent separate parts of it as unrelated to the whole. The principle of disintegration entering thus into its body through this narrow channel, goes on dividing the work to pieces. And in course of time disobedience to superiors, vanity, indolence and a whole host of other faults crop up within the work to ruin it for ever.

The Ramakrishna movement had passed through the two stages of opposition and indifference, a few years before the time when its great leader, the Swami Vivekananda, left us after giving it a working shape and organisation in the name of the Ramakrishna Mission. Since then the Mission has been

working steadily along that line for the last quarter of a century and has brought itself to that point, at present, where it has found recognition and acceptance in the hearts of the people of India and of several countries abroad. From a simple minor organisation working mostly in Bengal it has in this short period spread itself out quickly to all the Presidencies and provinces of India, nay to Burma, Ceylon and the Federated Malay States and to the far West, America and England, and incidentally to some other parts of Europe as well. You, friends, and your brother co-workers, had the good fortune to render yourselves willing instruments in the hands of the Master to bring about this glorious end. You started centres of philanthropic works at Benares, Kankhal and Brindaban, depending solely on the Lord and have proved before the public what your prophetic leader said in some of his speeches that not money but men—men fired with zeal for a noble cause and having character and fixity of purpose—are wanted to render such works permanent and successful. You started preaching and educational institutions at Murshidabad, Madras, Bangalore and many other places in Southern India and comparatively lately at Nagpur, Bombay, Kuala Lumpur and Rangoon, which have drawn the attention and respectful co-operation of the local public. And by your frequent relief-works to help the poor sufferers in famine, flood, fire and plague-stricken areas all over India, you have helped to arouse and establish the present confidence in the name of the Ramakrishna Mission in the hearts of the people at large. You have stuck to your places with wonderful patience and perseverance for twenty years and more, nay in some cases for a whole life-time since relieving hands could not be found.

Yea, the Master and His chosen leader have done wonderful work to help poor India and other more fortunate countries through you! But still greater works remain yet to be accomplished, and the Master and the Swami will do it all in time, even through you, if you keep close to their purity and singleness of purpose, their sacrifice and self-

surrender for all that is good, true and noble, and follow their footsteps with that meek and humble spirit with which you have followed them. For, if we come forward to do their work in any other spirit and think too much of ourselves, because we have been chosen and allowed to do their work thus far, we shall find to our great regret that we have been hopelessly rejected and that others have been chosen instead to take our places. Aye, remember the fate of the "Chosen Israel," when thinking themselves secure in their vanity and self-conceit they heeded not the Master and His warning that "The Lord can raise His chosen people from stocks and stones." Remember also the records of history about the fate of some of our once powerful sects in India.

Therefore, wonderful as it is to think of the wide extension that our Mission has attained in the past quarter of a century, it requires us to consider seriously the question, whether or not we have gained this at the cost of that intense spirit of sacrifice and love for the Ideal, which inspired us at the beginning—whether or not the work that we did at first for the love and glory of the Ideal has turned into slavery and bondage, through any undue attachment on our part to name, fame, power and position. Yes, the time is ripe for consideration and settlement of such momentous questions—for the separation of husks from the grains, of dross from the pure metal.

The present Convention gives you the opportunity. It affords you the rare privilege of meeting many of your senior co-workers and elders together to profit by their experiences, of discussing and settling future plans of work with them for the welfare of the Mission as a whole, and for warding off the dangers and evils that threaten to overtake all institutions at this critical stage of their acceptance by the public. Join it with all sincerity and openness with a view to make a thorough and sifting inquiry of the whole work to find out if we have swerved from our glorious Ideal in our struggle to keep up to the demands of this unique extension. Hold fast to the Ideal, for the Ideal has in it the stored up energy, the

Kundalini, behind every movement—and judge yourselves and others by its effulgent light. Thus alone, can you make the Convention a success for the permanency and glorification of the work. Remember it is not a new and untried path through which we are inviting you to travel. The Buddhists tried the method, of old, several times with the enormous spread of their congregation, and warded off the ruin of their noble work for a long time. And the followers of Jesus the Christ and of the prophet Mahomet had recourse to the same method from time to time in their past history. The plan of work, therefore, is not new, but the success of its application depends entirely upon the sincerity and unity of purpose of those who would apply it to their special case. So in the words of our Leader, I call on every one of you to arise, awake, and stop not till the goal has been reached,—till by the grace of the Master you have accomplished the noble task that you have imposed upon yourselves. Friends, brethren, children, co-labourers in the vineyard of Sri Ramakrishna, I welcome you with all my heart in the name of our hallowed Master, our illustrious leader, the Swami Vivekananda, and our late revered President, the best beloved of the Master, the Swami Brahmananda.

The speech had its effect upon the audience and created an atmosphere of serenity and thoughtfulness and was followed by a silence of several minutes. After this a Bengali rendering of the address was read out.

The spell of the Chairman's address was still unbroken when the Presidential Speech came to be delivered.

The old and venerable figure of  
Swami Shivananda, the President,  
one of those few souls who had  
betaken themselves to Sri Ramakrishna at the Temple  
Garden of Dakshineswar—on whom has fallen the mantle  
of the Swami Brahmananda, the first President and the  
very life and soul of the Order from the time of its in-

The President blesses the House :

ception,—then stood up to offer his prayers for the success of the convention, and bestowed his blessings and benediction on the assembly. The President's speech delivered : address, however, on account of his old age, was read out by Swami Paramananda of La Crescenta, Calif., U. S. A.

The following is the full text of the President's Speech :—

#### CHILDREN OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA,

Please allow me to express my sincere felicitations at your congregating together in this Convention of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission held for the first time in the annals of the Ramakrishna Order. This Convention, I am confident, will afford you a unique opportunity of comparing notes with one another regarding the various works carried on by the different centres which you have met here to represent and also of hearing from the few surviving disciples of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna about the ideas and ideals of religion as expressed in and through the life of our Master, which will undoubtedly go a great way towards increasing the necessary solidarity of this organisation.

Had Swamiji been alive to-day, how warmly would he have greeted you all and showered his blessings on this gathering for bringing its deliberations to a successful end. The vision of another great soul who was regarded by the Master as next to Swami Vivekananda in his capacity for realising religious ideals comes irresistibly before our mind to-day. Indeed, if Swamiji was loved and cherished by the Master as the instrument by which to proclaim to the world his great mission in the realm of religion—Swami Brahmananda was no less regarded by him as the person to fill an important and very responsible place in the scheme of his religious organisation. In fact, under the paternal care of the Raja Maharaj, the first President of the Ramakrishna Mission, the

organisation that had but existed as a seed in the monastery of Baranagore assumed its present form of a mighty plant. Although we sadly miss them and some of our brother disciples, as Swami Premananda, Swami Ramakrishnananda and others, who had no mean share in contributing to the growth of this organisation, I invoke the benedictions of them all as well as that of our Master on this auspicious occasion.

I do not wish to give you here any detailed scheme for the furtherance of the objects of this Convention. I shall be satisfied with telling you a few words in general out of my personal experience and I shall feel happy if I be of any service to you in bringing the deliberations to a successful issue.

Three decades ago when the present activities of the Ramakrishna Order with its various ramifications all over the country and abroad were in the womb of futurity, when people knew Swami Vivekananda as but a preacher of Hinduism who upheld the cause of our Sanatana Dharma in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, the great Swami with the keen vision of a Prophet clearly foresaw the part that the teachings of his Master would play in shaping the destiny of humanity at large which had been lying then in the melting-pot of a great transition. The admonition of his Master to forego the selfish enjoyment of Samadhi and dedicate his life to the welfare of the many, seeing Him alone immanent in the Universe, haunted him day and night ever since that memorable day when Sri Ramakrishna in a mood of inward absorption handed over to his illustrious disciple the precious fruits of his own realisations reaped in the course of the crowded period of his Sadhana and made him the happy conduit for the flow of the elixir of spirituality that the world needed at a great psychological period of its history.

After the passing away of the Master, Swamiji formulated a unique scheme of thought to shape the future of his countrymen for the revivification of the world culture—a scheme which was the outcome of some of his strange personal experiences. The chief formative influences that went to

determine his vision may be classified under the following heads : his Master's great prophecies regarding him ; his own training and realisations ; his knowledge of Western philosophy, history and Sanskrit scriptures ; the constant study of the divine life of his Guru before him, in which he found the key to life and the verification of the Shastras ; his travels all over his motherland in the course of which he availed himself of the opportunities of comparing her as she then was with what she had been, and of studying the life and thought of the people, their needs and possibilities and the diversities of their customs and faiths. Mixing with princes and peasants, with saints and scholars, he grasped in its comprehensiveness that vast whole of which his Master's life and personality was but an intense epitome. These then—the Shastras, the Guru and the Motherland—are the three notes that mingle themselves to form the symphony of Swamiji's life and works. These were the treasures which he wanted to offer to the world at large.

The above-mentioned experiences furnished him with the clue to the prevalent disruptive world-forces which necessitated the advent of a Prophet. The first thing that arrested his thought was the prevailing bigotry among the different religions of the world and a very parochial conception regarding the ideal of religion itself. The different creeds which were thought of by the ancient seers as but different paths for the realisation of one and the same Truth, maintained a bellicose attitude towards one another. Like frogs in the well, the followers of a particular sect refused to see anything beyond the tip of their nose. And secondly, religion working on a narrow basis subjected itself to self-condemnation by ostracising the various schemes of life from its scope. Religion was conceived as having nothing to do with the actualities of our everyday life and therefore was left aside as an exclusive ideal to be pursued by the recluse in the forest or by men outside the pale of society. The highest maxim of Vedanta was considered as utterly incompatible with work. A permanent cleavage was made between work and worship, renun-

ciation and service—an unfortunate factor which contributed most to our national degeneration. At this juncture the world sorely needed a man who would formulate a religion that would be scientific and a science that would be religious.

Swami Vivekananda found in his Master such a man. Sri Ramakrishna stood at that point of equilibrium in which the great conflicts of life neutralise one another. In him was found a wonderful *rapprochement* of the various apparently jarring creeds. First of all, by actual realisation he demonstrated the practical utility of the three main systems of Indian philosophic thought—monism, qualified monism and dualism—to reach the ideal which is beyond any particular philosophical doctrine. Again, reaching the same goal by following some of the accepted paths, *viz.*, Sanatana Dharma, Islam and Christianity, he demonstrated the efficacy of these different religions conceived to suit different temperaments. In him was revivified once more the long forgotten ideal of the Vedas, एकं सत्यम् वद्वा वदन्ति, "The Truth is one, but sages call it by different names." And lastly, in his life was wonderfully noticed a harmonious reconciliation between such apparently incompatible ingredients as Jnana, Bhakti, Karma and Yoga. A man who held the highest Samadhi in the palm of his hand, also melted into tears at the mere mention of the name of God. He who had realised Truth by following the intricacies of the Yoga system was also found undergoing the pain of slow crucifixion in the midst of tremendous activities for distributing the fruits of his own realisations among fit recipients. This all-sided man appealed irresistibly to the mind of his disciple, who clearly saw that the future world, reborn and rejuvenated, must bear the stamp of his Guru's genius.

The Buddhistic organisation of ancient India as well as the discipline and organised effort of the modern progressive West, where also he had travelled a great deal, might have suggested to the mind of Swamiji the idea of an institution that would, under proper discipline, make a practical application of the teachings of his Master. Swami

Vivekananda, a practical idealist that he was, soon after his return from the West, formulated the idea—at once original and bold—of a Math which would be the fittest mirror wherein future generations would find a true reflex of the life and thought of Sri Ramakrishna.

As the very basis of the Math we find the following words of the Swamiji. "This Math is established," said he, "for the attainment of one's own liberation as well as to get equipped for the amelioration of the world in all possible ways by following the path laid down by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva. Another Math working on this line will be established for women as well." These pregnant words of the Swami Vivekananda form the corner-stone, as it were, of the Math established by him. A proper understanding of these words, which mean much more than what appears on the surface, will supply the pivot of the entire organisation controlled and managed by the members of the Ramakrishna Order.

At the very outset we find that he has linked up into a single purpose two apparently diverse ideals, *viz.*, one's own liberation and service for the welfare of the world. Through this Math he has sought to weld together the ideals of renunciation and service, work and worship, which, as generally people believe, cannot possibly combine without proving detrimental to each other. According to his ideal, the attainment of personal liberation need not necessarily contradict the dedication of life to the service of humanity, nor should the latter in its highest aspect be thought of as apart from the activities of the man who is eager to pierce through the mist that has covered the effulgent Truth lying within his own self. If the highest illumination aims at nothing short of effacing all distinctions between the individual soul and the universal Soul, and if its ideal be to establish a total identity of one's own self with Brahman existing everywhere, then it naturally follows that the highest spiritual experience of the aspirant cannot but lead him to a state of exalted self-dedication to the welfare of all. He makes the last divine sacrifice

by embracing the universe after transcending its limitations which are the outcome of ignorance. Swamiji wanted to make the members of his Math the most willing instruments in the hand of God for the fruition of his work, the fulfilment of which task must confer upon them the felicity of the highest spiritual illumination. Sri Ramakrishna told us again and again that to enjoy a sweet mango all by oneself is a much lower ideal than to share it with others.

Again, looking from an ordinary standpoint we find Swamiji, the great Acharya that he was, giving us the ideal of an organisation wherefrom its members will get the greatest facilities of an integral realisation, rich and full in its conception and attainment. The aspirant will have to combine in his Sadhana elements of the four accepted paths—Jnana, Karma, Bhakti and Yoga, laying greater stress on a particular process according to his predominant temperament. Not a single one of these items must be left out, otherwise the result will be a little less than complete. Thus we shall presently see among the ways prescribed for the members of the Math a wonderful synthesis of meditation, worship, study and work.

That the Math must not limit itself within a narrow precinct but consecrate itself to a wider scope of activities, is clearly evidenced from the following words of Swamiji. "Such Maths we must establish," says he, "all over the world. Some countries stand in need of spirituality only, whereas others are in need of a few worldly amenities. We must lead nations and individuals to the realm of spirituality through paths suited to them by fulfilling the respective wants that such nations and individuals may be most suffering from." "The first and foremost necessity in India," Swamiji goes on, "is the propagation of education and religious ideas among the lower classes. It is impossible for hungry men to become spiritual unless food is provided for them. Therefore above all our paramount duty is to show them new ways of food supply."

These clear words unmistakably show what Swamiji conceived to be one of the principal items in the spiritual

exercises of the inmates of his Math. So far as Indian work was concerned, the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna acknowledging Swamiji as the expounder of his life and teachings must accept a programme of activities which have hitherto been considered as belonging to the secular domain and therefore left outside the scheme of life of those who wanted to attain the highest goal of existence here and now. It is not work, the Gita and other Shastras say, that demeans or elevates a man, but it is his attitude towards work that is the real determining factor. It stands to reason also that if with love and devotion a Sadhaka can discover Divinity in mere images, he can certainly with much more ease realise God through the worship of Man—surely a higher creation than the inanimate objects—if the worship be performed there with the same amount of sincerity, devotion and love. Without doubt man is the highest symbol of God and his worship is the highest form of worship on earth.

This ideal of Sadhana conceived by Swamiji further developed into a practical suggestion which he made regarding the plan of work of the Math. "This, then, is our aim," he said, "that this Math will have to be slowly developed into a finished university, where the culture of philosophy and religion must proceed along with a fully equipped Technical Institute. This is our primary duty. Other branches of study will be added later on to its curriculum." A very bold conception indeed! Nowhere in it is to be found the slightest trace of a compromise with the stereotyped ancient ideal of leaving out works from the conception of an ideal religion. This is the special significance of the message of Swamiji to his countrymen. In order to save the Math from the inevitable calamity that had befallen similar institutions in olden times, Swamiji warned its guardians to see that it must not lapse into a mere Thakurbadi or a chapel where superficial ceremonies take the place of the spirit of the thing—बाधाजीदेर ठाकुर बाड़ी. to quote his own words. "Such a chapel," said he, "may prove beneficial to a few, or satisfy the passing curiosity of a handful, but this Math

will prove of inestimable value to the whole world." This, then, is the basic conception of the Math founded by Swami Vivekananda.

A Math based on such a lofty ideal reflecting the life of Sri Ramakrishna, its guardian angel, cannot be anything but catholicity itself. Humanity has never before seen another life like that of Sri Ramakrishna synthesising the highest ideals of knowledge, devotion, work and Yoga. Those only who mould their lives after the perfect ideal of Sri Ramakrishna's character can be truly said as representing the ideas of the Math. Therefore Swamiji enjoined that the special aim of this Math would be the formation of character by combining the above-mentioned four paths, and that the spiritual exercises that would bring about such a synthesis would alone be accepted as the Sadhana of this Math. "Therefore," he said emphatically, "everyone must bear in-mind that a man who shows the slightest deficiency in any one of the above-mentioned ways has not been properly cast in the mould of Sri Ramakrishna's life. He who consecrates himself to the service of others does a nobler work than he who tries to work out his own liberation." This is really the special feature of this Math. Before the advent of Sri Ramakrishna it was thought perfectly natural, nay inevitable, that one system of religious thought alone could flourish in a Math. But realising the three main systems of Indian philosophical thought as but different readings of the Absolute, Sri Ramakrishna made it possible to establish a Math on the bedrock of transcendental experience wherefrom equal utility of all these systems of philosophy can be boldly proclaimed as leading to the realisation of the highest Impersonal Truth. To save his Math from the contingency of some unavoidable evil results, Swamiji laid equal emphasis on the culture of the head, heart and hands. He knew that mere work un-inspired by religion and unaccompanied by meditation, discrimination and other spiritual exercises, degenerates into a kind of pure social service activity. Such mechanical work, not attuned to a higher conception of life, piles bondage

upon bondage. Hands can work for the desired end when the vision is clarified and the heart finds facilities for its full expression. Again, simple discrimination or study of the scriptures ends in mere intellectual gymnastics, dry and insipid, if it does not express its conclusions in terms of the actualities of life. Similarly, devotion degenerates into meaningless and often dangerous sentimentalism if it dissociates itself from discrimination and work. To know Truth, to feel its presence in the innermost recesses of one's heart and to realise its expression all around—these are but three aspects of the same highest divine realisation. His ideal monk was one who would be now absorbed in meditation and the next moment be prepared to explain the difficult intricacies of the Shastras. The same monk again would with equal zeal cultivate the field and sell the produce of it in the market carrying it on his own head.

The following is the clear instruction of the Swamiji regarding the programme of work of the Math :—

"Want of culture brings about the degeneration of a religious sect. Therefore culture of knowledge should be practised in the Math without intermission. Luxury crushes the Math when its members forget the ideals of renunciation and austerity. Therefore these ideas must be always kept bright in the organisation. Dissemination of ideas adds to the vigour and vitality of an organisation. Therefore this Math must never stop its preaching activities.

"In a narrow society religion is generally seen to possess a certain depth and intensity like that of a small rivulet. Similarly, it is noticed that the depth and intensity diminish in proportion as the ideas of liberality creep into it. But the strangest thing is that transcending all such historical precedents, ideas broader than the sky itself and deeper than the ocean found a wonderful reconciliation in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. It is thus proved to the hilt that the greatest catholicity and the greatest extensity can exist side by side with the utmost intensity in an individual, and a society can also be established on such a basis, because society is but

an aggregate of individuals." Of course a man of wide and catholic outlook of Sri Ramakrishna's stamp cannot be met with every now and then. But such a want can be compensated and the integrity and cohesion of the Math kept intact, if its different members holding Sri Ramakrishna as their ideal and following different paths of Sadhana according to their temperaments are accepted as integral parts of the institution and equal facilities are afforded to all for individual growth and expression. Sri Ramakrishna may not exist any more in his physical body, but so long as this catholicity be kept untarnished the Math will certainly feel his presence. Swamiji also declared, "This Math represents the physical body of Sri Ramakrishna. He is always present in this institution. The injunction of the whole Math is the injunction of Sri Ramakrishna. One who worships it, worships him as well. And one who disregards it, disregards our Lord."

An institution of such a catholic outlook may contain, to all appearances, elements of disintegration—a fact to which Swamiji was very keenly alive. Again, all outward dissensions are preceded and accentuated by mental disruptions. Therefore Swamiji laid down unity of purpose as the greatest force for maintaining the integrity of the institution. All members of the Math must repeatedly study and think on this conception of the Swamiji regarding the Math and try to translate it into practice in their individual life. "Mutual love, obedience to the authorities, forbearance and an unalloyed purity can alone maintain unity and an *esprit de corps* among the members of the Math"—and save them from the calamity of disintegration. Fame is the last infirmity of noble minds and it seduces even the noblest soul from its path of duty. Hankering for fame causes jealousy which in the end spells ruin to the organisation. "Sri Ramakrishna never cared for name and fame. We are his followers and servants. So we must always set aside all allurements of name and fame. Our ideal in life is to carry out his commands, leading pure lives ourselves and teaching others to do so." A great responsibility rests on our shoulders. We must know that Sri Rama-

krishna sits on the crest of the wave that has already gone forth to raise humanity from its present state of depression—and it is through the members of the Math that people will judge of Sri Ramakrishna. Our work will proclaim his glory. We are his representatives wherever we may go or live. People will see in the members of this Math a reflection of Sri Ramakrishna. Consciousness of such responsibility cannot but bring about a unity of purpose among the different members of the Math.

A spirit of obedience on the part of the workers and that of willing service on the part of the leaders must pervade the entire atmosphere of the Math. The success of an organisation depends a great deal upon the capacity of its leader. The faculty of organisation is entirely absent in our nature. This has become our peculiar national trait. But the secret of success lies in the absence of jealousy. The leader must be always ready to concede to the opinion of his brother workers and try always to conciliate. "Don't try to be a ruler," Swamiji said addressing the leaders. "He is the best ruler who can serve well. Never attempt to guide others or rule others or, as the Americans say, boss others. Be the servant of all. Nobody will come to help you, if you assume the role of a great leader ; kill self first if you want to succeed. The great secret of success is never to figure out big plans at first, but begin slowly, feel the ground and proceed up and up." Again, "you must go and seize the crocodile first if you are told to do so and then argue." This should be the attitude of every worker. With great agony Swamiji said, "If there is any crying sin in India at this time it is our slavery. Every one wants to command and no one wants to obey. This is owing to the absence of that wonderful Brahmacharya system of yore. First learn to obey. Always first learn to be a servant and then you will be a fit master. The worker must carry out the orders of his superior, leaving aside even the consideration of his life. Fear is at the root of all misery. It is the greatest sin. Therefore we must overcome it altogether. The first and foremost cause that estranges a

brother from his brother is,—speaking ill of one behind one's back. The members of this Math must studiously avoid it. If a member must say anything against his brother, it must be confided to him alone. Not one among the followers of Sri Ramakrishna is bad. Had he been so he could not have found entrance into the Order. Every member of the Math must deeply ponder over it before judging others." These are some of the very practical suggestions which Swamiji has given for bringing about the spirit of co-operation and co-ordination among the different members and different centres of the Belur Math. His warning to the recalcitrant member still rings clear in our ears. "To make a great future India," Swamiji said, "the whole secret lies in organisation, accumulation of power, co-ordination of wills,—organisation alone, is the primary means for all progress and the only way for the conservation of energy. The curse of the entire organisation must fall on his head who would try to bring about its disruption and disintegration by word, thought and action. Nothing but ruin awaits him in this world or in that to come."

The present division of the activities of the Ramakrishna Order into those of the Ramakrishna Mission and the Ramakrishna Math, which may give rise to a little confusion, is a purely technical one. It is generally believed that the Math is, as it were, a place for meditation and study alone, whereas philanthropic works have been relegated to the scope of the Mission proper. Though in practice it has become so in some cases, it is necessary to clear up any confusion that may exist in this respect. From what I have said before you will clearly understand that the Math conceived by Swamiji includes everything—work as well as worship, social service as well as meditation and study. As we have seen before, he wanted to incorporate with the Belur Math a full-fledged university, including in its curriculum the study of religion and philosophy as well as that of technology. In his time no necessity was felt for making a formal separation of the Order into the Math and the Mission. To give effect to his ideals, he established an Association on the 1st May, 1897 to unite

the monastic and lay disciples of Sri Ramakrishna Deva in a common organised effort for the service of humanity. As the Association, which had been named the Ramakrishna Mission, thrived and its activities widened, it was given, in order to remove some purely technical difficulties, a legal status by registering it in 1909 under Act XXI of 1860 of the Governor-General of India in Council. Thenceforth on legal grounds alone a formal distinction has been made between the Math and the Mission. Really speaking, for the convenience of the public a part of the Math itself has been given, as it were, the appellation of the Ramakrishna Mission. All the members of the Ramakrishna Order, whatever may be their sphere of work for the time being, belong in essence to the Ramakrishna Math conceived by the Swamiji. Any attempt to make a cleavage between the existing Math and Mission works is distinctly against the ideal of Swamiji and therefore stands self-condemned. Any attempt to find a distinction between the ideals of the Math and the Mission is unholy and dangerous. Be good yourself and help others to be so—was the injunction of Swamiji to every member of the Math. And he wanted to give effect to this by a combination of the four accepted paths of Sadhana, allowing, as we have said before, fuller expression to a particular path according to the temperament of the aspirant. Hence there is no room for a clash of ideals. To try to find a distinction between the ideals of the Math and the Mission is like trying to distinguish between two facets of the same coin. Therefore those who are engaged in philanthropic works should be considered as important members of the Order as those who have devoted themselves to meditation alone in a cave of the Himalayas, provided all of them acknowledge their allegiance to the ideals of Swamiji. Those who retire from the arena of activity for a time and lead exclusively a life of meditation and study with a view to equip themselves more fully for the work, are regarded as invaluable assets for the growth and vitality of the organisation. The Math is a picturesque bouquet containing the flowers of

Jnana, Bhakti, Yoga and Karma whose variegated colours and sweet aroma contribute to its richness and beauty.

Well, friends, I have told you what I had got to say. From my little experience I tell you, children of Sri Ramakrishna, that our organisation lasts as long as the spirit of God pervades its atmosphere. Love, catholicity, purity and selflessness are the corner-stones of our organisation. No man-made laws can save it from ruin when selfishness eats into its vital. If you all try to become perfect—keeping intact your allegiance to this Māṭh, which gives you every kind of facility for reaching that perfection, you will add a leaf to the life of the organisation. Swamiji shed his blood for the Math. His spirit is still hovering over us. This Math is the visible body of Sri Ramakrishna. All those that have gone before us are still with us in spirit to help us in all possible ways. We must unfurl all sails so that we may take advantage of the divine wind that is ever blowing to take us to the destined goal.

Religion is the great mission of India. This is the only gift that we can bestow on the world. From time immemorial religious ideas flowing from this land have been contributing their quota to shape the civilisations of the world. We are still alive inspite of the many vicissitudes that have befallen this unfortunate race during the last ten centuries, only because religion forms the backbone of our life. With us God is the central pillar round which move all other schemes of life individual or collective. True greatness is weighed here in the scales of spirituality. In pursuance of the great law enunciated in the Gita the Lord has again incarnated Himself in this age as Sri Ramakrishna to revive the lost ideals of religion. Incarnations and prophets came before him in numbers to show us light in the midst of darkness, to elevate us from national depression. But the darkness of former ages that necessitated the advent of prophets, compared with the darkness that has overwhelmed us at present, may be said to be light itself. The former national depressions compared with our present one look like mere mud-puddles. Therefore to extricate us and to disentangle the world from the tentacles of

dark material forces. God has, through His infinite grace, incarnated Himself again in the fullest degree. "Through thousands of years' chiselling and modelling, the lives of the great prophets of yore come down to us; and yet in my opinion, not one stands so high in brilliance as that life which I saw with my own eyes, under whose shadow I have lived, at whose feet I have learnt everything. Before this great wave of spirituality there have been whirlpools of lesser manifestations all over society. It came, at first unknown, unperceived and unthought of, assuming proportions, swallowing, as it were, and assimilating all the other little whirlpools, becoming immense, till it assumed the shape of a tidal wave sweeping over society with a power that none can resist." That great personality, the greatest that the world has ever seen, is behind you. Our forefathers performed great deeds, you must do greater deeds still. Each one of us will have to believe that everyone else in the world has done his work, and the only work remaining to be done to make the world perfect, has to be done by himself. This is the responsibility we have to take upon ourselves.

In old Buddhistic monasteries a sincere effort was made to do good to the world through organised efforts. And they succeeded a great deal in their object. Since the record of history, Buddhistic monks, through their organisations, have perhaps put the most powerful lever for humanity's good. If the unknown history of some of the principal existing religions and systems of philosophy be ever written, the world will know how much these intrepid monks contributed to their growth and development. So long as those monasteries kept intact the pristine ideals of purity and renunciation, they were irresistible wherever they went. But when that spirit waned the religion of Buddha showed signs of decadence. This is a great historical lesson we are to learn. In the subsequent history of India we find occasionally an individual rising to the highest pinnacle of perfection, but he did not care much for people around him. Undoubtedly he realised a great ideal. But the ideal itself for want of a suitable medium of expression

died of inanition in the course of a generation or two. This is another great lesson. Again, we find during the last few centuries the growth and development of Maths and Ashramas in the country in a very large number. Though they might have benefited a comparatively small number of people who gave up the world, by providing them with facilities for their individual spiritual growth, they could not be of much help to society at large, because they omitted from their scheme of spiritual exercises a spirit of service for humanity. This is the third lesson of history. Swamiji took all these facts into consideration before setting forth the ideal of his Math. Dedication of our life to the attainment of our own liberation as well as to the amelioration of the world at large—“आत्मनो  
मोक्षार्थं जगद्विस्ताय च”—is what he has chosen for us—the ideal of all ideals. I have my fullest confidence in you all who have been earnestly endeavouring to realise this lofty ideal in life. You do not hesitate to brush aside any personal considerations, however strong, for the realisation of this ideal—and I clearly find Sri Ramakrishna, our Light and Guide, working from behind you and through you. His benign hands are at the back of all of your activities. It is his grace alone that has enabled your works to be crowned with success within such a short period of time. So long as you have faith in him, so long as you consider yourselves as humble instruments in his hands, no power on earth, however great, can shake you from your position by so much as a jot or tittle. Putting your faith in our Lord everyone of you can say, “Let me stand where I am and I shall move the world.” I exhort you with all the earnestness at my command not to be disturbed or discouraged by momentary failures. Failures are but the stepping-stones to success. Viewing success and failure alike, work on with unwavering faith in him and victory will be yours at the end. I only pray that your surrender may be complete. Be like the arrow that darts from the bow. Be like the hammer that falls on the anvil. Be like the sword that pierces its object. The arrow does not murmur if it misses the target. The hammer does not fret if it falls on a wrong place. And

the sword does not lament if it is broken in the hands of its wielder. Yet there is a joy in being made, used and broken ; and an equal joy in being finally set aside.

I invoke the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna on you all so that he may give you strength and courage to realise Truth in this very life.

Let the atmosphere of this Convention vibrate with a spirit of love and benediction. Let us, in conclusion, say with the great Indian sages and echo the voice of the Vedas :

त्रायते ॥ मधु कर्तन्त सिन्धवः ॥ माधवीर्णः सन्त्वोषधोः ॥ मधु  
 ॥ मधुमत्पार्थिवं रजः ॥ मधु धौरस्तु नः पिता ॥  
 : ॥

"Sweet blow the winds and the rivers scatter sweetness ! May the herbs and trees be full of honeyed sweetness ! May night and morning yield us joy ! May the dust of the earth be sweet unto us ! May father Heaven give us happiness ! May the sun shower Bliss on us ! May the cows yield us all-sweetness ! Om Joy ! Sweetness ! Bliss !"

When Swami Paramananda had finished, a Bengali translation of the speech was also presented before the gathering.

Before the assembly rose for refreshment, one more function remained and this was the address to be delivered

Secretary, Reception Committee, addresses the House :

by Swami Suddhananda, the Secretary of the Reception Committee.

This report of the Convention will be incomplete if we do not record in this connection the fact that it was solely through the unbounded enthusiasm and the unremitting labours of Swami Suddhananda that the idea of the Convention materialised. As he himself was suffering from hoarseness, he asked Swami Yatishwarananda to read out the few pages he had prepared for the occasion. The paper began with a short story of the origin and development of the plan of the Con-

vention and gave a précis of the transactions that were to be taken up and also a forecast of the probable issues that might be expected to come out of them. It closed with an announcement to the assembly of the names of the institutions that were represented at the Convention with their respective representatives, and a request to the representatives to elect from among themselves fifteen persons who would form the Subjects Committee. The function of this Committee, it was pointed out, was to collate and consider the many suggestions that were received from the various institutions and frame upon them suitable resolutions to be considered and passed by the Convention and then to be sent to the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission as recommendations for adoption as general rules for the conduct and management of the Association. The meeting then broke off for refreshment and met again and elected

The House forms a  
Subjects Committee : fifteen persons for the Subjects Committee.

With this the proceedings of the first day of the Convention came to a close.

## CHAPTER II.

### CHRONICLE OF THE CONVENTION FROM THE SECOND DAY.

Thus began the long-expected proceedings of the Convention, and the interest and ardour roused by the first day's sitting continued unabated till the end. And only those who had the opportunity to be present at the Belur Math during those days and to keep themselves attuned to the heart-beats of this grand assembly, could feel the currents that flowed underneath the surface of affairs. That golden background of religious ardour and enthusiasm which shone behind the scene and touched every heart, that earnestness and sincerity of purpose with which the representatives joined the proceedings from day to day and which marked the general tenor of the Convention sessions from beginning to end, will ever remain a pleasant thing to recall to one's memory.

Without further attempt at any scenic presentation we propose in the present chapter to deal with such details and incidents only as are worthy to be recounted and are essential to the completeness of the history of the Convention. The following is a simple record of the successive items that came up before the assembly, interspersed here and there with references to such episodes or diversions that require notice.

For a fuller record of the business of the Convention, comprising the papers and reports of work read before the assembly, the reader is referred to Chapters III and IV.

**The Second Day—April 2nd, Friday.—Morning Session  
(7 to 11 A. M.)**

The morning sittings of this and the three following days, as fixed up in the programme, were given to the reading of the reports of work submitted by the various institutions. These sittings were presided over by Swami Virajananda. Before the proceedings of the meeting began, Swami Jnaneswarananda sang a hymn, the strain of which was caught and responded to by the gathering in devout silence. The President then invited the representatives of seventeen institutions to present before the assembly the reports of the activities of their respective centres one after another. This done the session came to a close at about 11 A. M.

**Afternoon Session (3-30 to 5-30 P. M.)**

The Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission, though not strictly forming part of the convention proceedings, was held this afternoon and was presided over by Swami Shivananda, the President of the Ramakrishna Mission. The proceedings were opened by a song, after which Swami Shankarananda, one of the Joint-Secretaries of the Mission, read the Annual General Report. After discussion and consideration the Report was adopted by the meeting. Among other items of business, it may be mentioned that the meeting elected new members and nominated auditors for the various centres including the headquarters. An incidental suggestion was also made by Sjt. Bhupendra Kumar Bose regarding the advisability of including the names and addresses of the members of the Mission, monastic and lay, in the body of the Annual

General Report, published by the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission. The question was postponed for further discussion and final decision till the next General Meeting of the Association.

With a vote of thanks to the President the meeting then dispersed at 5-30 P.M. and the members and visitors present were next served with "Prasada."

#### **A Gymnastic Show (6 to 10 P. M.).**

The next function of the day was the display of gymnastic feats by the members of the Bally Athletic Association, which began punctually at 6 P.M. It was really an enjoyable sight, and the performers, though very young and mostly students, showed the skill of professional experts and specialists. Indeed for full four hours the spectators forgot everything save the feats they were witnessing. The performance was so much appreciated that it was a great disappointment to the gathering, when it was stopped after 10 P.M.

#### **Third Day—April 3rd, Saturday. Morning Session**

**(7-11 A. M.)**

As in the previous morning, Swami Virajananda presided over the function of the session which was devoted to the reading of Reports of work carried on at various places. As usual the proceedings began with an opening song. Then at the invitation of the President reports of twenty-eight institutions were read before the gathering.

The reading over, the assembly broke off at 11 A.M.

#### **Afternoon Session (2-45 to 5-30 P. M.)**

A public meeting was held this afternoon, in which the subject for discussion was the *Ideas, ideals and*

*activities of the Ramakrishna Mission.* It was attended by over a thousand people including some ladies both Indian and American. Swami Akhandananda was duly elected to preside over the meeting. After the opening song the President commenced the proceedings with the following observations :

The occasion that has drawn us together here on the grounds of this holy monastery to-day, is by no means a new affair in the history of India. We have in record instances of such conventions even in the Vedic times. To preach the sound principles of the Vedas as enunciated in the Vedanta Sutras, Maharshi Badarayana Vyasa called long long ago a great Convention at Badarikashrama. Coming down to a considerably later date we find the Buddhist councils convened with a view to propagating the message of Lord Buddha. And to-day we have met here to discuss how the life-giving truths which Bengal had the good fortune to reawaken in this age of rank materialism can best be taught and preached to the world.

Acharya Sri Sankara one day reorganised the decaying Hinduism and saved the essence of Vedic religion from the Scylla of Buddhist atheism and degeneracy on the one hand and the Charybdis of Brahminic ritualism and barren discourses on the other. The subsequent periods of crises to which Hinduism was exposed were tided over by reform movements led by Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak, Sri Chaitanya and others. The genius of India and Hinduism has thus been proceeding towards its destined evolution through successive phases of light and shade. It fought and triumphed over the many forms of degeneracy that followed in the wake of Buddhist missionary work. It withstood the violent attacks of conflicting cultural ideals that followed the Greek, the Mahomedan and other barbarian invasions, and was gradually advancing towards a peaceful settling down, when, towards the close of the eighteenth century, the darkest night in its history came, covering up the firmament of Indian national life. The sudden impact of a very powerful alien civilisation, with its concomitant factors of

materialism, external power, pomp and glory, at a time when India had just lapsed into a relaxation after her long and strenuous fight for the assimilation of all those extraneous forces that had rushed into her bosom, totally bewildered her and created a confusion in the whole fabric of Indian life that threatened it with extinction. The province of Bengal, as you all know, was the first to let in this new foe and welcome it with all the hospitality of a friend. Right at this juncture the God of India manifested Himself once again and pointed out the way to a readjustment of all this confusion and turmoil. And mark my words, it was Bengal, again, that was to be the field of this new manifestation in the person of Sri Ramakrishna, who by his unique life threw a challenge to the sceptics and agnostics of the age. In him the eternal truths of religion became once more living realities. His wonderful austerities, unprecedented renunciation and soul-enthralling God-intoxication made it once more possible for all to know the truths of religion as something tangible. He further demonstrated in his life that religion was nothing extraneous, but formed the very essence of being, and that none of the common avocations of life was incompatible with the practice of true religion. He lived in an incessant flow of divine ecstasy, but was never on that account insensible to any of the details of daily life. He taught that to realise and reach God one must establish some sort of relationship with Him—looking upon Him as one's Father or Mother, or Master, or Friend, or Son, or Beloved, or even Foe—and work and live for Him as such.

The most noticeable feature in the life of Sri Ramakrishna was his unstinted love and sympathy for people professing any creed or belief, if only they were sincere, and his deep solicitude for imparting spiritual blessings to all. Sincerity and earnestness was to him the essence of spiritual life. The sweet aroma of his divine life attracted earnest devotees and aspirants from all creeds and communities. And all who were thus drawn towards him respected and some even worshipped him as an Avatara, though to the pseudo-religious he often appeared to be a mere idolater and sometimes a maniac. He realised

and taught mankind that the different gods and goddesses are but different phases—manifestations under different names and forms, of the one Supreme Deity looked at from different angles of vision ; and the various forms of religion extant in the world are but various paths, suited to various temperaments, capacities and environments of human beings, all leading ultimately to the same goal, God, the Truth of all truths. He possessed a heart which was truly humanitarian, nay something more, for the abundant flow of his love and sympathy extended beyond the pale of the human species and embraced the whole of the manifested world, animate and inanimate. His humanitarianism was not of the kind usually preached from the press and the platform; it was born of realisation of the immanent divinity in all. He saw and loved all as his own Self. And it was this love that formed the keynote of his life.

From an acquaintance with the more widely circulated and popular teachings of Sri Ramakrishna many still seem to be labouring under a misconception that the ideal and practice of 'Seva-Dharma' as enunciated and inaugurated by Swami Vivekananda are a deviation from the Master's views. This sounds very strange to us who had the rare privilege of living with him for years. Often have we seen the Master moved to tears and active impulses of charity at the sight of poverty and distress. We have seen him exhorting the more fortunate of his devotees to spend unstintedly for the distressed people in the spirit of service to Narayana or God. And you know how he vindicated his own continual daily intercourse with people resorting to him for spiritual benefit, on the ground of his looking upon them as images of Narayana. All who have read authentic biographies of Sri Ramakrishna must have had occasion to come across instances of the kind. Once while he was on a pilgrimage to Baidyanath (Deoghar) he was so much grieved to find the grim pictures of famine and starvation among the Santhals there, that he told Mathur Babu that unless he undertook to feed and clothe those people, he would rather suffer and die with them than move one step further, leaving them in that sore plight. On one occasion he was, no doubt,

heard to denounce organised works of charity before the late renowned philanthropist, Babu Krishnadas Pal of Calcutta, on the ground that such work tended to make men egoistic and lead them away from God. But that certainly was meant for the person talked to. It might just serve as an admonition to all of us to analyse our minds as regards the motive behind our activities in this direction and thus safeguard our best interests in life. Then you may remember what the Master once said to the late Moni Mohan Mullick, one of his very sincere devotees, when he heard that a certain part of Bengal was in great distress for want of good drinking water. Sri Ramakrishna asked him to excavate tanks and wells to remove that want in the locality and said many things by way of encouragement to such acts of benevolence. There are many such instances which I cannot all reproduce here. What we after all know is that Sri Ramakrishna was the mainspring of all that the Swamiji spoke and did. It was the Master's message that Swamiji carried from door to door, elucidating it to all in the light of what leading he had from the Master himself. In fact, if there is the least bit of sincere love and sympathy for the poor and the distressed in any one of us, his sons and followers, we owe it to him and him alone. He was the fountain-head of our inspiration. Swamiji's heart bled for the poor, the distressed and the down-trodden of our race, just as the Master's did, and it was to find out some means for bettering their condition that he went to the West and roamed over the globe, like a lion hit with an arrow. India was the queen of his adoration. Not a sob was heard in the land that did not find an echo in Swamiji's sympathetic and responsive heart. He was sorely grieved to find the abject state of ignorance among the women and the masses of India, and to observe how the canker of untouchability had been eating into the vitals of the Hindu race. And once he said to the late Swami Brahmanandaji, of revered memory, that it should be our first duty to work for the removal of this canker of untouchability and the poverty of the race.

In a letter addressed to one of his brother disciples he

wrote : "You have read in your scriptures पितृदेवो भव मातृदेवो भव, (Let the parents be your gods) but I say to you दरिद्रदेवो भव मूर्खदेवो भव"—'The poor, the ignorant and the down-trodden, let these be your gods.' Read his works and you will find them replete all through with this one behest to us—sacrifice the lesser for the greater ; make your life an offering for the service of Humanity and above all, of the poor and the ignorant of the country. It was to give effect to this cherished desire of his life that he inaugurated this movement known as the Ramakrishna Mission, and it was with the same object that he approached the Americans for help in that work, if help could at all be procured. The new enunciation of 'Seva-dharma' and its application to the motherland was the crowning glory of the Swamiji's life. Like a second Bhagiratha he brought down the soothing stream of Seva-dharma and let it flow over the length and breadth of the country. A new stream must be given a channel to run through before it can gain in volume and strength and make its own way down and water the plains, and the Ramakrishna Mission was conceived to supply that channel. It is so gratifying to find to-day that the country is gradually espousing the cause advocated by the patriot saint of modern India. This is exactly as it should be.

The regeneration of India should engage the best attention and energies of every true-born child of hers, and the sooner we wake up to a full sense of the trust and responsibility left to us and begin to advance along the lines laid down by the Swamiji, the better for us all. With the penetrative insight of a true seer Swami Vivekananda grasped the problems of our national life and suggested remedies for them all. But to him the problem of all problems in India was that of Education. "There is not one problem," he used to say, "that cannot be solved by that magic word Education." A true, healthy national education along lines suited to the genius of the race is what we need first of all. The problem of women occupied a very prominent place in Swamiji's mind. Female education and a vindication of their motherhood as conceived by the seers of old were exceedingly dear to his

heart. But his ideal of education was certainly not what we are mad after to-day. It is through the mothers of the race that its best treasures are preserved, and the women of the country should, therefore, be brought up in such a way as to make them fit to fulfil that sacred trust. Swamiji tackled all the national problems of the race in their details and in a half-serious mood he once said to one of us that there was nothing left for us to think, the brain-work having been all done by him ; ours was only to tread along the lines chalked out by him and work out the details. Aye, friends ! The real work is still ahead of us. We have not yet passed the stage of preparation even. Up heroes ! There is no time for sloth or relaxation. Look forward and march ahead. Do not turn back to see what you have done, but open your eyes wide to see what you have still to do and gird up your loins for that. Sacrifice, immense sacrifice is what is wanted. Swamiji was prepared to sacrifice thousands of lives for his motherland, and can't we do one? Go like the rhinoceros, go like the Buddhist monks of old bidding defiance to fear and pain, throwing aside all idea of individual comfort—nay, of salvation even. Go ye as champions wherever there is the widow's tear, or the orphan's cry—wherever there is the darkness of ignorance, or the groan of poverty. Listen to the valiant charge of the Swamiji still ringing in the ear : "If life is transient and death inevitable, why not give it up for a noble cause?" Remember what high hopes the Swamiji cherished of you—the youth of the country. You fairest jessamines on earth, bring all the whiteness and fragrance you have and lay them on the altar of Sri Ramakrishna—of Humanity. All that is wanted of you to-day is that genuine feeling, that love and sympathy for the poor and the down-trodden which Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda had in their heart of hearts. Have that feeling for the country—your motherland—the land that gave you the first foothold when you dropped on the earth from an unseen world.

I wish I could speak to you, however imperfectly, more of our Master and our Leader, of the great mission of their

noble lives, and also of the great task which they expected us willingly to undertake and perform, but as there are a number of other speakers from whom you will have a better exposition and light on all these points, I must stop now. I shall only recite to you a short passage from the Sukla-Yajurveda to show how much the consciousness of national well-being developed even in the Vedic rishis of old, who lived in an atmosphere far above worldly cares. Engaged in the performance of a yajna (sacrifice) for the benefit of his Yajamana, the Rishi lost himself so much in prayers and oblations for the good of his country and his people that when suddenly the thought of his Yajamana crossed his mind, he could barely offer one oblation only in his favour, saying,

"—May the Yajamana have a heroic son," and again turned to prayers for the good of his people, his community and his country :

“आ ब्रह्मन् ब्राह्मणो ब्रह्मवर्चसी जायतामा राष्ट्रं राजन्यः शूर इष्वव्योऽति-  
व्याधी महारथो जायतां दोषं धी धेनुर्वौद्धानडुनाशुः सप्तिः पुरम्भिर्योषा जिष्णु रथेष्ठाः  
सभेयो युवास्य यजमानस्य वीरो जायतां निकामे निकामे नः पर्जन्यो वर्षतु फलवत्त्वयो  
न ओषधयः पच्यन्तां योगक्षेमो नः कल्पताम् ।”

“O Brahman, Thou God of gods, may the Brahmans of our land be all endowed with the fire of the knowledge divine ; may the kings be all heroes skilled in warfare, and may they remain untouched by any meanness ; may the cows be all full of milk, the bulls be strong and healthy enough to carry heavy loads, and the horses be all strong and swift ; may our women be all endowed with womanly grace and beauty and be prepared to look after the household well ; may our children be all victorious ; may our youths be self-controlled and well cultured ; may the Yajamana, have a heroic son born to him ; may sufficient rain fall to all lands and houses ; may the medicinal herbs of the land be fully developed and efficacious ; may all our people be endowed with sufficient ability to gain the objects of their longing and may they be fit

to preserve and make right use of what they have already acquired."

What we want to-day is such unsullied and perfectly selfless love for the land of our birth. Let not patriotism be a matter of talk with us. Let there be sincere and earnest devotion to the best interests of the country and of humanity. Let our patriotism be manifest in all that we do, at every moment of our life. Let whatever we do in private or in public be helpful to the onward march of the nation, of the race and of the community we belong to.

The President then introduced the following speakers of the afternoon in succession.

First, Swami Saradananda delivered a lecture dwelling upon the fundamental ideas behind the varied activities of the Mission. The full text of this lecture as well as of all the others will be found in the next Chapter.

Then Swami Sharvananda, the President of the Madras Ramakrishna Math and Mission Branch, spoke upon the subject for about half-an-hour and was much appreciated by the audience. We give here a report of the speech delivered by him.

Through the dark tempestuous night on the sea of life the beacon-light of hope has pierced forth. A new shower of peace and benediction has descended upon the world through the great *avatara*, Sree Sree Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. I regard this personality as the fulfilment of Vedantism, as the veritable embodiment of the highest spirituality (*Atma-Jnana*) and Religion (Dharma). Swami Vivekananda, the St. Paul of Sree Ramakrishna, so to say, preached his message of universal love and toleration, of harmony and co-ordination, with such force and fervour that it is gradually and steadily making headway even in the face of the conflicting claims of a present-day rank materialism and hedonistic conception of life. I do clearly

see that all the great humanistic movements of to-day have been directly or indirectly influenced more or less by the teachings of this great sage and seer of the age. The day has come when the world should meet all contradictions and find out a path to perfection in every phase of life. And it is a happy augury that quite in keeping with the spirit of the time man has begun to realise once more that the goal of life is not the acquiring of physical comforts but the attainment of Knowledge ; for no man can really be perfect without realising *Paravidya* (Supreme Knowledge).

In the Vedic times we find two distinct schools of thought developing side by side in India—viz., the Karma Marga and the Jnana-Marga. According to Karma-marga or the Mimamsaka school of philosophy man is not man if he cannot do and create something. To them the scriptures aim at action only. Man is not man if he is without action.

"—"The purport of scriptures is action; those scriptural passages whose purport is not action are purportless." But according to the Jnan-margis the *summum bonum* of life is Jnana or Knowledge supreme. Man's creative power can never go beyond nature ; and again it is not in the manifestation of external creative power that manhood lies. Drawn out to their highest, human ingenuity and power cannot touch the fringe of that vast ocean of the Unconditioned Reality, from where emanates the Power which is beyond all powers. The highest aim of life should therefore be to transcend Nature i.e., to go beyond the limitations of time, space and causality and stand face to face with the ultimate Truth. Therein is real blessing—immortality. Hanker after this immortality, for this constitutes real happiness. This happiness or bliss cannot be obtained through the senses ; the senses can never give permanent happiness. The happiness that the senses bring to man slips away in no time ; again it comes and again goes away, thus making life a series of alternated happiness and misery. The Vedanta therefore cries halt to this fruitless struggle and directs us to the search after the Truth within. It denounces the claims of the Karma-margis and says, "Ye performers of sacri-

fices, you are satisfied with Karma because you are covered with *avidya*."

These then are the two schools of thought we find in the Vedic times : one drawing the forces in man outwards and the other directing them inwards, one teaching that happiness consists in conquering nature externally and the other teaching that real happiness lies in subduing internal nature, in concentrating all the energies in the Self and thereby realising the Real within. Attempts were at one time made to reconcile these two view-points of Karma and Jnana by the great *avatara* Sree Krishna in the Bhagavad Geeta. He explained therein that *inaction* (नैकर्म्य) of the Jnanins is not idleness as alleged by the Mimansakas ; it is absolute self-surrender to and consequent identification with, the *atman* or the in-dwelling Deity. It means the merging of the individual ego which is the prime-doer of all work in the Eternal Self. All work is in the realm of nature, but by realising the self within one transcends nature ; and hence there is no work for him. In the Bhagavad Geeta, therefore, we find there is an attempt at reconciling the various claims of Jnana, Karma, and Bhakti. But in course of time we find again that there arose *acharyas* or interpreters who took up different standpoints in their conception of the relation between man, universe and the Supreme Deity,—viz., dualism, qualified monism and monism, all drawing their support from the same Geeta none-the-less. These gave rise to a variety of creeds and the conflict between their contending claims continued long. With the lapse of time new creeds and denominations began to press themselves upon the religious consciousness of India, and made confusion worse confounded. To crown all, different religions and creeds were out fighting against one another, each striving to assert its own infallibility. This undoubtedly marks an abnormal condition. For no man can suffer his religion to be dictated by others ; it is a matter which concerns the individual, his characteristic temperament and the particular ideal of his life. All this created considerable unrest and confusion of thought in matters spiritual and religious. At this juncture the

very soul of India, nay of Humanity as it were, cried for a way out of this inter-religious warfare and looked up for divine guidance. And the redemption came in the life and realisations of Sree Ramakrishna in whom all contradictions met to be reconciled. This unique life showed the solution of the age-long problems of religious feuds and demonstrated the truth of the time-old saying imbedded in the Vedas—“एकं सद्गुप्ता वह्नां वदन्ति”—‘Truth is one, sages call it differently.’ The solution he gave of the problem was not one of Eclecticism or Syncretism, but of a harmonious co-ordination justifying the truth of all religions according to different conditions and predilection of the individual or the group mind. Not that there is truth in all religions but that all religions are true. Religions are but different paths leading to the same goal which is God. This is the one truth which we have to realise now, and thus work harmoniously to bring about a betterment in all the different branches of our individual and collective life. Religion does not consist in verbal assent to any creed or dogma, it consists in life and realisation ; and sincerity and earnestness constitute its bedrock.

Sree Ramakrishna is the ideal man for the age—the manifestation of the highest possibilities of life. He was a real Brahmin, a *Tapodhana* i.e. one whose distinction lies in the non-possession of every thing. He made religion the very basis of life. In the book of his life we read the great lesson that *Karma* is necessary, but *Dharma* is the light and culmination of it. Sree Krishna in the Bhagavad Geeta exhorted Arjuna and through him all mankind to be a *Yogin*. Be a *Yogin* in whatever sphere of life you may be. A *Yogin* does not mean an anchorite. To be a *Yogin* one has only to change the motive behind all his activities—to change the vision, the outlook of life. Pitch your ideal high up in the Supreme Truth and strive to see and serve the Truth in and through all that you do. Sree Ramakrishna through his life and teachings gave fresh vigour and impetus to what the expounder of the Geeta had said to Arjuna. Concentrate your energies on any one thing and that will

enable you to reach the highest perfection of Yoga. To-day India is not the motherland of the Hindus only. The synthesis of the doctrines expounded in the Geeta above would not therefore meet the demands of modern conditions. The problem was one of a larger synthesis and co-ordination that would bring to its fold all the various forms of religion existing in the world and recognise their respective positions and claims in the universe of man ; and for the first time in history there came the man who would exemplify and hold out before the world of men the truth that all religions are but different phases of the one Eternal Religion.

India has forgotten the teachings of the Geeta, has forgotten Karma-Yoga, and hence the degradation in her national life. "India, wake up to thy heritage," is the clarion call of the Swami Vivekananda. Be a real Hindu, a Vedantin. The whole world looks up to thee. The renaissance must come, for humanity needs it. The Mission of India is to revitalise her spiritual forces first and send out their humanising waves throughout the world. Remember the constant exhortation of the Swamiji.—"Be and make, let this be your motto."

Rai Chuni Lal Bose Bahadur then spoke feelingly for about half-an-hour and his remarks, which derived their force from the experiences of his life, were warmly responded to by the audience. The following is a report of his speech.

I am linked with three generations of the Ramakrishna Mission. What I mean by this is that I have had the rare privilege in my life to sit at the feet of Sree Ramakrishna ; Swami Vivekananda and myself were friends in our early days and I had also the good fortune to associate myself with the work inaugurated by the Swamiji from the early days of its inception ; and then I am associated more or less with the present order of Sannyasins as well even in this fag-end of my life. I have thus been in touch with and have

many a time actually worked in co-operation with the Mission during the last twenty-eight years or more, with the result that I stand here to-day to bear testimony to the excellent work which the Order has been doing and still more the ennobling spirit of "Service as worship" in all work which the Mission has brought into play in the country by word and example through its varied activities. I have in some cases had occasion to see first-hand the workings of a number of permanent institutions, philanthropic, educational and missionary, fostered under the loving care and assiduous labour of the self-sacrificing workers of the Mission in different parts of the country—at Hardwar, Benares, Allahabad, Brindaban and at other places. I have all through marked with joy and delight and often with a sense of pride and reverence the achievements of these youthful adherents of the neo-faith, struggling through innumerable odds and difficulties by sheer force of their character and their genuine feeling for the poor and the distressed, their undaunted zeal and courage unaided by any temporal power worth counting upon. I remember, in this connection with a sense of sincere delight and admiration, incidents connected with my own life which bear witness to the intrepid zeal and earnestness combined with a sincere feeling and love for the distressed with which the workers of the Ramakrishna Mission conduct relief operations during flood, famine and pestilence regardless of their personal safety. Years ago, when certain parts of Bengal were under a ravaging flood, I with a few friends of mine collected some money to offer relief to the distressed people, but none of us having any experience in regard to such work in the actual field of operation I approached the authorities of the Belur Math to assist us with some leading in the matter. Swami Sadananda, since deceased, was deputed for the work. We then proceeded to the afflicted areas with the Swami and was struck with awe to see how that great man used to carry to the needy people pots of rice, pulses and other necessaries wading through the surging floods running breast-high risking his own life every moment, which I still remember vividly. Angels from

heaven may have looked at his actions with wonder. Instances like this can be added one after another without end. And to my mind the services which the Mission has rendered to the country within the short period of three decades towards the practice and realisation of the ideal of *Sevadharma* and dissemination of true knowledge, wisdom and renunciation are an asset to the nation. Besides, the country has had already much to learn and adopt out of these noble activities. The ideal of 'Sevadharma' is the spirit of the age. The call to 'service to the motherland in the spirit of worship' is a slogan which the Swami Vivekananda has sounded forth for India of to-day. The ideal, rightly understood and intelligently practised, is calculated to serve all those great national ends which we have so long been fighting for. And that exactly is what the Ramakrishna Mission is conceived to aim at and fulfil.

Another great contribution—perhaps the most precious one to humanity at the present age—has been the light of true knowledge, wisdom, proper understanding and evaluation of the truths which religions and philosophies have been teaching mankind since the dawn of civilisation. This light emanated from Sree Rama Krishna and it is being diligently thrown broadcast by the Ramakrishna Mission in the country and abroad from the days of Swami Vivekananda's world campaign. Sree Ramakrishna by the example of his life has shown mankind the truth that different systems of religion represent but different phases of the one Eternal Religion, which is the religion of human soul, suited to different times, temperaments and circumstances. Religions do not contradict but fulfil one another; they but minister to the hankerings of the human heart according to individual predilections and they all tend towards and ultimately lead to the one Goal which is God expressed in different names and forms. Philosophies as well are but different readings of the same eternal mysteries of existence from different angles of vision and there is as such a co-ordinated gradation in respect of the truths they found. Bigotry and

dogmatism, therefore, have no place in religion and philosophy. None can dogmatise on any particular creed or form to the exclusion of others ; his is as much true as those of others. The pivot of religious life, whatever be the creed, is renunciation i.e. foregoing the less for the greater, the baser for the nobler with difference only in degree. This renunciation grows as one develops towards self-control (Brahmacharya) and self-denial in the concerns of personal life. These are again the cardinal virtues that underlie the growth of true manhood. And there is no denying the fact that the present degeneration of the country is due to the lack of these virtues in our national character. The national or social life demands many things from the individual which he can not give unless he be prepared to forego personal interests to a certain extent. True, material prosperity cannot come to any individual or nation unless the individual or the nation is ready to strive for it sincerely and diligently ; but a spirit of self-abnegation is also necessary for achieving the collective ends of national life.

Renunciation or self-denial does not necessarily imply monastic life in all cases. All men are not to be monks. Only a few who feel a tremendous impulse from within can forego the lesser demands of family life and devote themselves to the larger demands of a life for the ideal with individual liberation and the good of mankind as its one outlook. With a little loss to their parents such noble souls become ministers to the well-being of the community and the world at large. But all are not ordained for that. Nevertheless there is sufficient scope in the life of the man of the world even to become an instrument for the greater good of the community. The ideal of Brahmacharya and the spirit of renunciation are nonetheless incumbent upon a house-holder's life. Only they have got to be consistently adjusted according to the conditions of that life. Unrestrained pandering to the flesh-instincts is not the object of married life. Children ushered into existence like so many brutes only bring poverty, moral and physical deterioration and hence national decay. With a mighty flow

of virility, strength and courage in every vein there must be firmness of self-restraint examples of which could be found in the life of many in ancient times. Raghu—that mighty king Raghu of olden days—was not the son of parents of our type. His father practised for long the austerities and self-discipline of a life of Brahmacharya in the hermitage of Vasistha. Think again of the discipline which Aswapati underwent in order to beget a daughter like Savitri. Think of the life and character of Bhism and the host of other heroes whom India produced in the glorious past of our national history. A good deal of what children become they inherit from their parents. Remember the teachings of our ancient scriptures and all the saints and seers of bygone days. Remember also what Sree Ramakrishna, the latest and the most complete of the whole host of them; taught and enjoined upon you through his unique life. We should learn to look upon marriage as a holy alliance for a healthy continuance of the race as also for the spiritual uplift of the pair and not as one for base enjoyments of the flesh. The Master used to say—Husband and wife should, after having one or two children, live together as brother and sister and should thenceforward devote themselves to the training of their children, to their own spiritual life and to the well-being of the society.

These are the vital truths of life which the Ramakrishna Mission has taken up to teach and propagate for the good of the country and of humanity. The Ramakrishna Mission owes its origin to the demands of Indian national life and the voice of the Swami Vivekananda, which rings through every note of it, lives as an inspiration for all futurity. It is primarily for the interests of India that the Swamiji went to the west. His idea was to establish between the two hemispheres by a better understanding of the lives of both, friendly relations of mutual exchange and fellowship and thus profit by the best gifts which the one has to give to the other. The western nations are materially far ahead of us and we need their help to develop in that respect. But they lack sorely in the more vital concern of life viz—spiritual. And as friendship is possible

only between equals, Swami Vivekananda repeatedly urged upon us to wake up to a full recognition of our spiritual heritage, which the west seeks for its redemption, and raise ourselves up to an equally advantageous position to demand their friendship and help in matters material. Begging will not do ; be prepared to give and you will be given back in equal share. This is what the Swamiji meant, and this is what he called his foreign policy, while the extensive practice and application <sup>c'</sup> the ideal of Sevadharma in all that we require to develop a healthy manhood in the country—in education and sanitation, in the uplift of the masses and the depressed and in the education of our mothers and sisters above all—is what he called his Home policy.

Last came the paper written by Sjt. Kamakhya Nath Mitra, Principal of Rajendra College, Faridpur. The paper was written in Bengali, and the audience was delighted with the high order of its excellence. An English rendering of it is given in the next Chapter.

The meeting then came to a close with a vote of thanks to the President. Then followed a musical entertainment and distribution of "Prasada" to all assembled.

It is worth while to mention in this connection that for want of time several papers and speakers on the subject of this afternoon had to be kept back. An overflow meeting was subsequently arranged for them in the following afternoon.

#### **Fourth day—April 4th. Sunday,—Morning Session (7 to 11 A. M.)**

As on the two previous days, the morning session began at 7 A.M. and was presided over by Swami Virajana-nanda. After the opening song and invocation the President called upon the representatives of thirty institu-

tions to read their reports before the Assembly. The reports read, the assembly broke up at 11 A.M. to meet again in the afternoon.

### Afternoon Session (2-45 to 6 P. M.)

At first there was no fixed programme of business for this afternoon, except a musical entertainment to be given by the Hatibagan Kali Kirtan Sampradaya, organised by Sjt Sishir Kumar Bose of No. 2, Raja Bagan Street, Calcutta. But as a portion of the business of the meeting of the previous afternoon had to be put off, owing to shortness of time it was decided to hold an overflow meeting now on the same subject. The notice of the meeting, naturally, could not be well circulated, still the audience was no less than four hundred.

Principal Kamakhya Nath Mitra was elected to preside over the meeting. The proceedings commenced at 2-45 P.M. with an opening song, followed by a few introductory remarks from the President, who then requested Swami Yatiswarananda, the President of the Bombay Ramakrishna Ashrama, to read his paper on *Ramakrishna Mission and the Ideal of Service*.

Next, Swami Nirvedananda, the founder and Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, Students' Home, Calcutta, made a short, but thoughtful and impressive speech, which was to the following effect:—

You have heard a good deal about the ideas, ideals and activities of the Ramakrishna Mission. As I do not presume to be able to hold your attention for a long time on the subject, I shall say only a few words in connection with the basic idea which this Mission is trying to work out according to its humble capacity.

Let me begin by drawing your attention to an interesting

phenomenon of the history of human civilisation. Out of the human race have evolved two different types of *Superman*—the Monster-man and the God-man. The Monster-man says, 'The world is for me ;' the God-man says, 'I am for the world.' The one says, 'The weak must be sacrificed for the strong ;' while the other says, 'The strong must be sacrificed for the weak.' The Monster-man says, 'Might is right ;' the God-man says, 'Righteousness is might.'

Indeed, these two types of Supermen have furnished humanity with two different paths. When the ideal of the God-man captures the imagination of the human race or a section thereof, civilisation advances, wholly or partially, in the path of love and sacrifice, and there is peace, individual as well as collective. When the other ideal holds its sway, the path of civilisation is marked by fight, and there is unrest, individual as well as collective.

The modern world has almost thrown overboard the ideal of the God-man. The Monster-man is its avowed ideal. Buddha, Christ, Sankara, Mohammed have all been thrown to the background ; they are being preserved like so many interesting specimens of fossils for antiquarian research. Their commandments have all been swept aside, as they have been found to be incompatible with the tastes and requirements of modern society.

Modern culture aims at developing the intellect, but it has no eye upon chastening the heart which is left under the sway of brute instincts. Selfishness, jealousy, anger, hatred, and lust for power and possession rule the modern man. Intellect has advanced, science, art, industries, and commerce have made a headway, but they are manipulated for aggrandising the strong and exploiting the weak—simply because man in spite of his boasted culture has remained a weakling helplessly swayed by brute impulses of greed and ferocity. A gigantic brain worked by a brute-mind makes a monster ; and modern society is seized with the ambition of producing monsters. But, alas, monsters cannot bring peace either to themselves or to the world !

The watchword of modern civilisation is *survival of the fittest*. This is a law taken from brute-life. Man is about to forget the fact that he differs widely from the brutes. The brutes cannot sow, nor can they weave ; the brutes cannot increase their efficiency, nor can they reduce their wants ; so they struggle for their existence, and they feel no moral scruple in suppressing the weak. They have no demand for spiritual growth, and so they require no lesson on self-sacrifice. It is the prerogative of man to evolve spiritually towards the ideal of God-man by obeying the *law of love and sacrifice*. It is the prerogative of man to taste the transcendental bliss of spiritual growth that love and sacrifice do always bring in their train. It is the prerogative of man to ask for the pardon of those who have fixed him on the cross. The brutes cannot do this—they do not produce a Buddha or a Christ. So, for man the law of real evolution is the law of renunciation and service. But alas, modern society has pinned its faith on the brute. It is bent upon preserving brute instincts and brute laws on the human plane. This is why there is so much fraud and strife, unrest and agony all over the world.

Now, what is the remedy? What will solve the fundamental problem of the world's sufferings? What will wash off the bad blood that has been created between Labour and Capital, the ruler and the ruled, the coloured races and the white, between different sects, different communities and different nations? The solution is simple. Humanity has to shift its angle of vision from the ideal of the Monster-man to that of the God-man. Man has to replace the brute doctrine of the survival of the fittest by the divine law of love and sacrifice—renunciation and service. Humanity for its peace, nay, for its very existence, has to accept the motto of "serving the weak, the down-trodden as Narayana, as divinity." This is no cant for a handful of Sannyasins, but a working formula for the whole world to readjust its affairs—a watchword for the right type of human civilisation. This is the solution. But our fascination for the wrong ideal is too strong! The right path of peace and progress is hidden from our vision!

At this grave crisis of human civilisation another God-man has appeared on the scene to attract our vision towards the path illuminated by a galaxy of God-men that the world has produced. The ideals of faith and purity, truth and sincerity, love and sacrifice have again blazed forth in all their splendour in Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, who stands like a pillar of fire showing the right path to erring humanity.

It is in the hallowed name of this God-man that this Mission is standing meekly to whisper into the ears of men the message that they have to accept the ideal of the God-man, they have to obey the law of renunciation and service and adjust their affairs accordingly—otherwise peace individual or collective will remain an absurd dream. This Mission is standing here with the banner of renunciation and service, to serve the world with India's offerings of spiritual ideas and ideals which have been required urgently for the redress of human sufferings all over the world and for bringing about a greater renaissance for which the world is waiting.

Swami Nikhilananda then read a paper on the *Ideals and Activities of the Ramakrishna Mission*.

The President in his concluding remarks expressed his appreciation of the three speakers of the afternoon, and spoke of the high hopes he cherished with regard to the still greater works the Mission would achieve in future, with a number of such picked men on the roll of its self-sacrificing workers.

The proceedings of the meeting were brought to a close at 4 P.M., and the 'Kali Kirtan Party' were next asked to begin their performance, which continued till shortly after 6 P.M. The performance was really a valuable spiritual diversion and was well appreciated by many. This terminated the functions of the fourth day of the Convention.

**Fifth Day—April 5th, Monday—Morning Session  
(7 to 10 A. M.)**

The morning session this day had as on previous occasions Swami Virajananda in the chair and opened with an invocatory song. The reports of twenty-four institutions were then read before the Assembly.

Two other reports which came late, were also accepted and taken as read.

With this, the reading of the reports of the various institutions was complete, and the assembly then rose for the morning at about 10 A.M.

**Afternoon Session (2-45 to 5-30 P. M.)**

A public meeting was held this afternoon and was presided over by Swami Saradananda. The audience was over one thousand people, among whom were noticed some ladies both Indian and American. The subject for discussion was *Religion and Philosophy in the light of the Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda*. The meeting opened with a song which created a devotional atmosphere in the pandal. The President next commenced the proceedings with a few observations made in Bengali to the following effect:—

The subject of to-day's meeting is the Ideal of Religion and Philosophy in the light of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and it is incumbent on us to understand fully the true import of the subject matter of the discourse. You have first of all to understand that Religion and Philosophy as conceived in India are eternally related to one another. In fact Religion is the culmination, the fulfilment of Philosophy, and as the Swami Vivekananda has said "True religion begins where metaphysics ends." I have already dwelt at some length upon what I have had to say.

in my previous lecture. I shall therefore present you to-day with only a few observations, which to me seem to be very vital in the present condition of our country,—as there are a number of speakers abler than myself to do full justice to the subject. I say they are abler speakers advisedly; for we have a Sanskrit proverb

i.e. one should desire victory everywhere but defeat from the son. The speakers of this afternoon are like sons unto me and hence I do not hesitate to call them my betters.

We always work with a certain idea, a thought behind, which serves as the motive power. And all such thoughts or ideas impelling men to multifarious activities fall, judged by a certain ethical standard, under either of the two classes, good or bad, noble or ignoble. I am, of course, dealing with those thoughts only that are classed as good and noble. Paramahamsa Sri Ramakrishna used very often to quote from Ramprasad's song—'येमन भाव तेमन लाभ मूल से प्रत्यय'—meaning 'Like thought like attainment, but it is faith that counts.' Standing on the firm rock of faith whoever strives to reach God through whatsoever form and name, attains his object only if he is sincere. There is also another Sanskrit saying to the same purport, *viz.*

is the idea so is the reward. One develops spiritually as much as one is pure and sincere in regard to one's ideal. If we could realise those grand ideas thought and lived in life by Sri Ramakrishna our lives would have undoubtedly been more blessed to-day; even if we could not rise so high, but could bring ourselves to a mood to seriously think over and meditate upon those ideas and ideals we would have certainly been of better service to ourselves as well as to the land of our birth. The country could not yet accept in earnest those lofty ideals and that is why we are still in this miserable plight to-day. Remember my sons, the ideal and revelation that had been manifested through Sree Ramakrishna and voiced forth through Swami Vivekananda came as a divine dispensation for the present age and it is our solemn duty to realise them in our individual lives and instil them into others.

Calcutta to-day is in the midst of bloody communal riots and the news of them are filtering to us here. It is not far to seek the cause of this strife which besides other reasons lies mainly in the country's failure to accept the catholic and tolerant ideas of Sree Ramakrishna. If we could have impressed upon all his message of harmony, love and toleration we would certainly have been spared the pain of witnessing all this hatred and jealousy, fight and blood-shed. It is our duty therefore to live and hold out the truth of those humanitarian ideas in individual as well as in collective life. To know whether there is truth in Islam, Sree Ramakrishna, after proper initiation from a Fakir, underwent all the religious practices which Islam enjoins upon its followers, in that holy retreat of the *Panchabati* in the Dakshineswar temple garden, and realised that Islam was as true as other forms of religion. He realised that the particular mode of worship enjoined in the Koran, if practised sincerely and honestly, leads the aspirant to the realisation of the same Truth as do other modes. If our countrymen could be convinced of the truth of his realisations they could not have committed those sacrilegious acts of breaking and defiling images, temples and mosques. You cannot expect to bring about a unity between these two communities unless there be that purification of heart, unless there be a conciliation of ideas and ideals, unless there be that sincere respect for each other's ideas and beliefs. You cannot work this unity by social intercourse, inter-dining or any other expediencies of the time. The Hindus must *believe* that Islam as a religion is as much true as Hinduism with its various creeds. and the Mussalmans must likewise *believe* that the Hindu Religion with its variety of creeds and customs is as much true as Islam. Sree Ramakrishna saw and said long ago that there was a mountain-high barrier that separated these two great communities. This to me seems to be due to the reason that the Mahomedans even now are possessed with the idea that they were one day the ruling race of the country. This of course is like sniffing in the fingers the aroma of Ghee tasted long ago, as we have it in a Bengali adage. There

are of course other reasons. We come from two distinct streams of Civilisation, the Aryan and the Semitic which differ widely in their ideas and outlook. Still there is hope for union of these two, if only we can eliminate all that narrowness and bigotry which pass for religion even to-day. So I said before, that there would not have been so much hatred, jealousy and bloodshed if we could impress upon our countrymen the truth and spiritual outlook of the life and message of Sree Ramakrishna.

In studying the fundamental ideas about Religion which Sree Ramakrishna has left for us the first thing that we come across is that God can be seen and talked to, just as two of us can do here. We have to believe this. Secondly, if we are to reach God we must establish some sort of relationship with Him, be that of the father, the friend, the master or anything, and must try to realise Him as such with a single-minded devotion. There are of course other and finer conceptions of the God-head, but they are not for the generality of mankind. Few men can follow them up to their logical conclusions and live in that dizzy height. Ordinary persons cannot dream of and carry them out in lives without some form or symbol. In any case sincerity and whole-hearted devotion to the ideal are the determining factors in life and *Sadhana*.

The greatest obstacle in our way to God is the Ego (*आहंकार*). As long as there is the 'I', God is far from us. The 'I' must be completely merged in the 'Thou'. We must resign ourselves completely at the feet of the Lord, and then only we can realise the truth. Believe in any form, in any personality and establish any form of kinship with Him, you must throw yourself completely at His feet, make Him the only thought of your life and actions and be wholly absorbed in His idea, and then only you shall be blessed.

Called upon by the President, Swami Paramananda, the founder and President of the Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, California, and of the Vedanta Society, Boston, U. S. A., then rose to speak. The Swami began

by citing a poem of his own composition which is reproduced below, spoke feelingly and held the audience for nearly half-an-hour. The following is a synopsis of his speech :—

We read in the Book of his Life the light which Sree Ramakrishna diffuses around him. O, thou saviour of the world, we hail thee and pray to Thee that thou mayest soothe our mortal sight with thy mellow white light for ever. Gentlemen, we have promise of a very hopeful future in having such a personality as our guide. No pomp, no exhibition of learning, no dogmatism, but soft devotion was the keynote of Sree Ramakrishna's life. He lived in his life just what the

world needs today. His life was the natural outcome of the cravings of millions of the age. We have to move on with the time and our present work is to be drawn towards that great light. His life was a full-blown lotus and as the bees come when flowers bloom, so they came who afterwards became maddened with the intensity of its fragrance. They poured forth their lives into the poem of his life and message and the world was filled with it. In the Swami Vivekananda it reached its fulness. Some look upon the Swamiji as a dazzling figure of *Rajas*; but to me he was not that. He only clarified everything. To him silent work only counted. If you have any message to give, give it through love only. There was no hankering after being a Master or a Leader either in Sree Ramakrishna or Swami Vivekananda; yet they became such.

Gentlemen, you already know that the salient features of the life-message of these twin souls, are sincere devotion to one's ideal, toleration and sympathy for others and selfless work for humanity in the spirit of service and worship to God,—virtues which go to make a true yogin. The principal theme of their life was the recognition of all forms of religion as the manifestations of the one Universal Eternal Religion. To them all mankind were brothers and sisters in the family of God. Swami Vivekananda was the brother to humanity. Ye, the young of the country, recognise the Swami in his full colour and follow him with fervour, enthusiasm and selfless devotion. This is the morning of your life, and, in the words of Sree Ramakrishna, butter churned in the early morn is always the best. Do not trouble your head with intricate theological discourses and perorations; the vital truths are as clear as day-light. Feel an impetus from within. The truth of all truths is within you. Manifest yourselves, who knows what power is within you? Try to feel and feel sincerely before you proceed to do anything; from intense feeling will come all the strength you require. Feel for yourself, feel for your country and make a consecration of your life to that end. The Americans felt and felt for freedom and for humanity, and should not we? Bring out your best powers for the service

of the motherland and of humanity. The union of the East and the West is possible through religion ; we have to chasten our hearts and be ready to embrace one another with brotherly feelings. Try to find out some point of contact with all mankind, and grow by mutual exchange of the very best you possess. "In seclusion I tried to find thee out, but now I see thee everywhere, and with this thought my soul is at rest"—this should be the very criterion of Knowledge. Hatred cannot be conquered by hatred ; let India prove this before the world. Mutual love and a better understanding of one another and the recognition of the truth एक सत्पाना वृद्धा वद्दल । one appearing as many, these should be the positive forces to work the Harmony of Religions and Nations as taught by our Master and Leader.

Religion, we must always remember, is a living force and does not consist in verbal and colourless assent to any creed or dogma. Live what you believe in—this is Religion. Philosophy is nothing if it has no bearing on life, if it cannot suggest and find out some practical solution of the vital problems of life. Religion and philosophy go together ; one fulfils the other. That religion which makes life a series of selfish struggles only is no religion at all. Religion must be the end in itself and must make men feel for all beings as manifestations of the Divine. One cannot but be touched when the Swamiji's appeal reaches one's heart : "The world is burning in misery. Can ye sleep, ye heroes? What the world wants today is twenty men and women who can stand in the street yonder and say that they possess nothing but God. Who will go? Why should one fear? If this is true what else do matter? If this is not true what do our lives matter?"

The following papers were then read before the assembly :

*Faith and Belief.*—By Captain A. U. Mosca, an Italian, who had come to India to get the advantage of Hindu spiritual studies and practices and had for some

time been keeping himself in touch with the Ramakrishna Math.

*A few words on the Rudrādhyaya.*—By Swami Kamaleswarananda, President of the Gadadhar Asram, Bhowanipur, Calcutta. The paper was in Bengali.

*The Cry of Agony.*—By Brahmachari Kumara Chaitanya.

*Vedanta and the Principles of Universal Religion.*—By Swami Vasudevananda, Editor of the *Udbodhan*—the Bengali organ of the Order.

*The Clarion Call.*—By Swami Jnaneswarananda.

Swami Madhavananda, the President of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati (Himalayas), then spoke to the following effect :

Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were twin personalities embodying and representing all that humanity demands of us today. Among other things, the harmony of all religions formed the central theme of their life and teachings. They evolved a synthetic co-ordination of the different schools of Vedanta philosophy, and as the Vedanta constitutes the epitome of all systematised thought, the synthesis they developed covers the whole range of philosophic thoughts of the world. Broadly speaking, philosophic thought falls under the three representative schools of dualism, qualified-monism and monism. The conflicting claims of these three and other schools had so far given rise to a mass of perplexing theories without any practical solution to the problems of philosophy. Sri Ramakrishna, and after him Swami Vivekananda, discovered and showed the way to a solution of these problems. They unravelled this confused mass and presented to the world a synthesis in which dualism, qualified-monism, monism and the whole host of other

isms' formed the successive steps in a graded hierarchy of thought-processes culminating in monism, the highest point to which philosophy could soar. All these systems of thought, they held, stand in a natural order of sequence from one to the other, admirably suited to the requirements of the different degrees of intellectual development in men. None of these can be dispensed with without causing a break in the chain of thought, for each of them has its own place of importance in the scale of human evolution. For instance, dualism is necessary to a common intellect which has not yet been so rational as to comprehend the monistic conception, or even the qualified monistic viewpoint.

Similarly they taught and demonstrated in life that the different religious creeds and doctrines that are extant in the world are so many ways suited to men of different temperaments satisfying their innate cravings and ultimately leading them to the same goal of all,—which is God. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda have thus founded a veritable Parliament of Religions where nations shall shake hands with one another standing on the common platform of Humanity.

Religion according to these two masters means realisation—it is being and becoming, and not merely an assent to a particular creed or a set of doctrines. "Make the inside and the outside one, live as you think"—was their passionate appeal. In other words, sincerity in endeavour constitutes the burden of their practical teachings. The goal we must and are sure to reach. And we shall be highly benefited if at every step in the journey we carefully and assiduously study and follow the masters on whom the Truth dawned. Blessed indeed are they who illumine the world from time to time with the radiance of the Light of Truth reflected in their lives.

Swami Vipulananda, of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trincomalee, Ceylon, was the next speaker. The following is a summary of his speech :—

The History of Philosophy shows that the progress of

World's Thought has been taking place along two distinct paths, the path of objective research and the path of subjective self-realisation. The Scientist puts forth his best efforts in observing the external universe. He adds one fact to another. His efforts may be humble but his successors begin just where he left and the noble edifice of Science rises higher and higher. The true philosopher, on the other hand, has a much more laborious task to perform, he has to grasp wholly and completely the great synthesis in the world of facts. This at first may seem an impossible task. Indeed it is impossible, if the method adopted were the same as that of Science. It comes within the limits of possibility, because the true philosopher directs his attention not to crude facts discovered by the senses, but to the conscious principle which lights the senses and thereby makes them instruments of thought. He seeks to know that, by knowing which everything else becomes known. Such true philosophers have lived among all the great nations of the world. It is they who have made true and lasting contributions to knowledge. The soil of India has been sanctified by the touch of the sacred feet of many such seers. When one great God-man comes upon the earth, the light that flows from his Divine Presence sheds its lustre upon the Arts and Sciences and the amenities of true civilised life. We all have heard of the Buddhistic universities and the manner in which the disciples of the Buddha carried the torch of wisdom to distant corners of the earth. A greater than Buddha has come into our midst. A few of his spiritual sons, the disciples who have had his personal touch are still with us. In the light of his teachings the Arts and the Sciences and everything else which makes life worth living are going to have a new meaning and a new interpretation. Already on all sides we see with our own eyes how the spirit of tolerance taught by the Master is extending a bond of love in the minds of those who have listened to it and thereby making their lives better and nobler. The seed has been sown, the sprouts are already in sight, and time will bring forth the blossoms and the fruits.

Sjt. Satyendra Nath Majumdar, Editor of the Ananda Bazar Patrika, Calcutta, next read a paper in Bengali under the title of “নবযুগের সন্ন্যাস”—*Monasticism of the new Era*. It was written for the meeting held on the 3rd April, but as the writer could not be present on that occasion the President was pleased to allow him to read it out to the gathering this afternoon. The paper however is rendered into English and reproduced along with those of the Third day.

Before bringing the proceedings of the meeting to a close the President requested Swami Akhandanandaji to speak a few words bearing on the subject of the afternoon.. The Swami accordingly spoke as follows :—

In the midst of jarring creeds and ideals Sree Ramakrishna came as the Messenger of Harmony and Peace. His life furnished a meeting ground and a reconciliation for all the various credal doctrines and ideals of life. Readers of his biography know how the life and spiritual career of this wonderful man, beginning as a worshipper of the Goddess Kali at the temple of Dakshineswar and passing successively through the various modes of Sadhana prevalent in the country, finally culminated in the realisation of the fundamental unity of all religions. After the completion of this unique course of Sadhana, this wonderful life became an instrument in the hands of the Divine Mother for diffusing broad-cast the light divine. As a result of his unique realisations there dawned upon him the highest spiritual illumination and a wonderful spirit of sympathy and toleration for all, so much so that people professing apparently contending religious ideals and creeds, nay, even atheists and agnostics, found in him the teacher *par excellence* and were illuminated by the touch of the superbly holy atmosphere he constantly created around him. In this connection I remember the story of one Mr. Williams, a Catholic Christian, who one day came to Sree Ramakrishna. This blessed devotee saw in the Master the

personification of Jesus Christ and inspired by the hallowed vision soon fell in an ecstasy. He began to utter prayers in adoration before the Master and then left with a divine glow in his heart.

Different systems of religion to him were but different paths leading to the same goal. He used to say that just as there may be many gateways, doors and back-doors to a house so in the spiritual domain also there are various pathways leading to the Sanctuary of God—some of them may be like highways while others represent filthy lanes and bye-lanes but all leading towards that one goal. He was never heard to utter words belittling or condemning the rites and ceremonies of any religious creed.

But nevertheless he always held out before us such only of the religious paths as by the exuberance in them of the cardinal virtues of purity, sincerity and loving devotion to the higher ideals of life may be called the highways to the temple of God, to the exclusion of others which have a likelihood to mislead the unwary traveller. And one day when Swami Vivekananda showed some inquisitiveness before him regarding certain modes of Tantrik Sadhana, the Master rejoined—"Well, those are back-doors, there is the main gate open to you."

But for that reason he never denounced them altogether. But his main emphasis was upon purity, sincerity and love of truth. Having these one is sure to reach the Divine, whatever path one may traverse. Every man or woman is free to choose his or her own path or form of religion—the one that may suit his or her own temperament and tendencies of mind best and follow that sincerely and devotedly. But all the while he or she should be prepared to concede to others the same respect and consideration. This idea was very nicely illustrated by the Master with the following example. Just as a wife gives due share of respect and attention to all the members of a family but has intimate relations with her husband alone, so a spiritual aspirant should respect, nay, help, if possible, all others who hold different ideals and methods of spiritual

practice, but keep fast to his own with unwavering faith and devotion, in the stillness and solitude of his heart.

The co-ordination which Sree Ramakrishna has shown between different systems of philosophy is another unique feature of his teachings. The different philosophical systems are the results of speculations in the process of unfolding the mysteries of creation. If so, it is sure that the logic and presentation of one shall differ from those of others just in the same degree as they themselves differ from one another in respect of the different levels of intellectual evolution on which they stand. No two men can think alike. Thus the contending systems of the Vedanta—nay, of philosophic conception as a whole—only represent so many stages of evolution. One leads to and is a fulfilment of the other until the Highest—Adwaita—is reached. To a man on the lower plane the doctrines of Adwaita philosophy cannot but sound unintelligible and blasphemous, while to one standing on the highest plane of rationalism, dualism and its concomitant ideas of creation and the like are all childish babble.

The outlook of Adwaita *i.e.*, merging of the individual in the universal—the divine essence of being is in truth the highest goal of religious life as well as the highest conception of philosophical speculation. None could yet or can ever go beyond that anyway. But as its dizzy metaphysical height can hardly be reached by many all at once, Sree Ramakrishna used to say that people of average spiritual and intellectual elevation should try to accept Adwaita as the ultimate truth of life but for all practical purposes should adopt the dualistic conception and live in some sort of kinship with the God-head. All the dualistic forms of Sadhana, it is known to students of the scriptures, tend to lead men gradually nearer and nearer to the Divine and do thus make them fit to conceive the higher truths of life through His grace. The acceptance of the Adwaita as the ultimate truth and the graded and co-ordinated evaluation of the other forms and systems of Religion and Philosophy again have one more aspect as

regards harmony and toleration in as much as it constantly reminds one of the fact that the different religions are but paths leading to the Ultimate Beyond. No man can therefore posit the one to the exclusion of others, and this is how the seeker after truth is saved from playing the frog in the well and narrowing down the breadth of religious vision to the mould of his own particular conception.

With this the proceedings of the afternoon ended and were followed by some musical entertainment and distribution of "Prasada" to all present.

#### Sixth Day—April 6th, Tuesday—Morning and Afternoon Sessions (7—11 A. M. & 3—6 P. M.)

The morning and the afternoon sittings of the day were devoted to the deliberation upon the resolutions framed by the Subjects Committee. Nominated by the President, Swami Sharvananda presided over the functions of the day. The resolutions evoked a lively interest, and the discussions that took place disclosed a full sense of responsibility on the part of the representatives. Without going into details we record below the resolutions as they stand passed by the house..

#### THE RESOLUTIONS.

1. In view of the fact that the country stands greatly in need of the right type of education, this meeting of the representatives suggests that the Mission should give greater attention to educational work than has been done in the past and should formulate a definite scheme for the guidance of the educational activities of the Mission.

2. This meeting of the representatives suggests that in the expansion of the work of both Math & Mission proper attention be paid to the real spirit of Karma-Yoga.

3. This meeting of the representatives suggests that the authorities may permit the opening of new centres only if competent workers be available and if the report by an authorised member of the Order about the local needs and conditions be favourable.

4. This meeting of the representatives suggests that members of the Order authorised by the Committee of Trustees or the Governing Body be sent at least once a year to inspect the general procedure of the work of the branch centres, both Math and Mission, with power to look into the Accounts. Expenses are to be borne in part by the centres concerned.

5. In view of the fact that the dissemination of the principles of religion as interpreted by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda among all classes of people is one of the main working ideals of the Order, this meeting of the representatives suggests :

(a) That proper steps be taken for the training of preachers, who should have a general knowledge of our Shastras in the original, and that of one of the principal provincial languages as far as possible.

(b) That efforts be made by the President and one or more members of the branch centres to learn the local vernaculars also.

6. In order to develop a spirit of co-operation and co-ordination among the workers of the three existing departments of the Ramakrishna Order, viz : preaching and publication, education and philanthropy, this meeting of the representatives suggests the holding of departmental conferences at least once in three years.

7. For the efficient management of the Math & Mission works, this meeting of the representatives suggests :

(a) That except under special circumstances the monastic heads and workers of the centres of the Order be transferred from one centre to another, or relieved at least every six years and four years respectively, by the Committee of Trustees or the Governing Body. It further suggests that the heads of the

branch centres concerned should be consulted before transferring or relieving workers.

(b) That no local monastic worker should be the head of a particular centre except under special circumstances.

8. In view of the fact that much confusion arises with regard to the division of duties between the Chief Supervisor and the Secretary to the Local Committee of the Mission branch centres, this meeting of the representatives suggests that the functions of the Chief Supervisor be defined and incorporated in the Bye-Laws of the Memorandum of Association of the Ramakrishna Mission.

9. In view of the fact that the want of sufficient number of trained workers in the different departments of the Mission is being keenly felt, this meeting of the representatives suggests that arrangements be made at a suitable place for a general and special training of available workers according to Swamiji's Math Rules. Further, that special stress be laid on a similar type of training at all centres of the Math & Mission.

The resolutions were then sent up by the Convention to the Committee of Trustees and the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission as recommendations.\*

#### **Seventh Day—April 7th, Wednesday—Morning Session (7 to 10 A. M.)**

##### **THE CLOSING SCENE OF THE CONVENTION.**

It was with mixed feelings that the promoters and participants of the Convention were looking forward to

\* The Committee of Trustees and the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission adopted these resolutions with the following modifications :—

In Resolution VI substitute 5 years for 3 years and in Resolution VII substitute 8 years and 5 years for 6 years and 4 years respectively.

Regarding Resolution VIII the function of the Chief Supervisor is thus defined :

The Chief Supervisor will give suggestions to the Secretary or the Assistant Secretary for the better management of the work without interfering in the practical management of the centre and submit annually two reports, and more if necessary, to the Governing Body on the work of the centre.

the closing scene of the Convention—all anticipating a repetition of the stirring spectacle of the first day, but none the less the sorrow also of the impending farewell. The day dawned and the eastern sky seemed to reflect the distant glow of the morning sun—the gloom of night still lingering. The combination produced a solemnity in all nature that rightly represented the mixed feelings of joy and sorrow in the minds of the gathering. The bell announced the approach of the hour for the final sitting of the Convention, and representatives and visitors were seen stepping into the pandal in grave silence.

After the Swamis Shivananda, Saradananda, Akhandananda, Subodhananda and others entered the pandal and were received with ovation—the whole gathering standing on their feet—the proceedings of the morning began.

The programme of the closing day of the Convention was short and simple. After the opening song by Swami Ambikananda, a few words of advice and benediction were spoken by the Swamis Saradananda, Shivananda and Akhandananda to the young Sadhus and workers representing the various institutions assembled there. The Convention then terminated with two more rapturous hymns sung by Swami Ambikananda to the accompaniment of Mridanga played by the master-hand of Sjt. Bhagawan Chandra Sen. So delightful and ingenious was the skill displayed by the latter that Swami Shivananda, the President, was pleased to announce the offer of a gold medal on behalf of the Convention to the gifted performer.

The proceedings throughout were rather of an informal nature, and being stripped of all trace of cere-

mony and routine, they were profoundly tender and even touching. As the senior members of the Order spoke straight and with homely simplicity to the young members, whose sincere aspiration was to follow in their footsteps, it seemed as if some living fountains of inspiration were welling up before the assembled persons. Veteran workers and ideal mentors that they were, each word of theirs had a magic, which went home to every heart. It was quite evident that nothing was farther from their intention than making any speech, yet in simple and almost homely phrases, they gave to the audience the very quintessence of their life's experience and wisdom. Every look and gesture had the stamp of character behind it, and every precept conveyed a message and sometimes a revelation. Mere reproduction without the setting cannot do even a semblance of justice to what was said and done, though the chronicle would be incomplete without a short sketch of the observations made by them.

Swami Saradananda opened the proceedings of the meeting with the following observations :

Very little remains for me to speak to you today after what I have said in my previous addresses and at the several informal gatherings and discourses that were held during the last few days. The one thing that I now want to impress upon you is that you should think and think over the resolutions you passed yesterday and should try every one of you faithfully to give effect to them, when you are all back to your respective centres of activity. This convention, you should further remember, is by no means the last one. Try to remember always therefore all that you have heard and deliberated upon here on this occasion and try day in and day out to realise and fulfil in life all that you may have learnt from this august meeting till the day when you shall meet again at the next convention, so that you may compare notes and

judge things for yourselves. Remember always the ideal you have had before you and strive by all means to realise the same in practical life, so that wherever or in whatever circumstances you be, the world may read in your life the ideal you stand for. Let me, in conclusion, pray to God that He may give unto you the requisite strength and courage and be with you now and for ever and guide you through all your struggles and activities in life ; may He bless you all with the fortitude and the character to face equally the successes and failures, the joys and miseries of life.

Swami Shivananda, the President, then spoke a few words of benediction which ran to the following effect :

I have marked with great interest and pleasure the sincerity and earnestness with which you joined the proceedings and deliberations of the convention from day to day and I am glad to note that you have brought them to a successful close through the grace of the Master and the Swamiji, who are ever present with you. I pray that you may have steadfast faith and devotion to the Ideal, and strive incessantly to realise that in life. Let there be not the least wavering in your faith and let you all be willing and happy instruments in the hands of the Master and the Swamiji for the service of humanity. The Lord is indeed the sole doer of all that you do and see around. May you all have clear vision of the truth and may you all make a complete consecration of your life at the altar of their worship and service. You serve humanity through Him and Him through humanity. Know this and direct all your life's efforts to that one end, which the Swamiji has solemnly enjoined upon you, viz—আত্মনে ভিক্ষার্থ উগ্রহিতায় চ। —‘For individual liberation and for the well-being of the world :’ You can serve the world best when you have realised the truth yourself and have thus freed yourself from the allurements of the world of sense. This is only how one can do real good to others both in the material and the spiritual plane. Let not your incentive to service be any thing else than selfless good to others. There should not be the

least trace of self-seeking in any form behind your activities. This constitutes practical wisdom. So I earnestly exhort you all to give yourselves wholly up to that one end and aim of life, and pray that the Lord may help you and give you strength and courage in all your struggles. Realise first the divinity within and then go out to help others to do the same. In the words of the Swamiji "Be and make, let this be your motto." Purity, sincerity, out and out sincerity, and love of truth, let these adorn your character. And before I stop I again pray to God from the bottom of my heart that He may bestow His choicest blessings upon you all in an ever-increasing degree.

Requested by the President, Swami Akhandananda then rose to speak and terminated the proceedings of the convention with stirring words exhorting his audience to sacrifice their all at the altar of service to the motherland. He said :

The convention closes its sessions to-day. This is therefore the last occasion to speak to you anything in assembly. The life episode of the wonderful superman Sree Ramakrishna, the magnetic spell of whose hallowed name and teachings has drawn you all together here, the undying stories of this unique manifestation, his unforeseen renunciation, his unfathomed love, sympathy and toleration, and above all his almost infinite moods of spiritual emotion—these and such other aspects of the Master's life have been dwelt upon and interpreted by so many speakers in so many ways and will continue to be so done for how long who can say! But in thinking of him the idea that comes uppermost in my mind to-day is that the moment one saw him one became transported to a spiritual elevation before which all distinctions and differences vanished ; and even now if one could sincerely meditate upon the life or seriously think over and understand the true spirit of his harmony and toleration, one could no longer afford to cherish any bigoted and controversial ideas.

Sree Ramakrishna was never for a moment heard to

denounce any man because of his religious belief or profession if only he were sincere. He took man at his best and always gave him a lift from the plane where he stood. He tolerated all shades of religious belief and his grace fell on all who had no double-dealing, who did not play at make-believe and who acted exactly what they spoke and meant at heart. If there was anything which he was never tired of denouncing most emphatically, it was hypocrisy. I remember one day to have seen a man who denied the idea of the existence of God before him. And mark you what the Master, who was ever so deeply absorbed in ecstatic communion with the Divine Mother, said to him in reply: Well, who told you that there is God? I would not ask you to believe in any such idea. But then, you cannot with reason deny that there is a Power working behind this universe. One may attribute any name to it, but it remains there all the same. Why not take it in that spirit and try to know more intimately what you believe in? Know this and be happy. To be sure, mere belief cannot give rest to your inner cravings. Knowledge—true knowledge of the mysteries of this phenomenal existence can alone do that.

The same attitude of universal tolerance and sympathy for all irrespective of their religious beliefs and social or spiritual standing, we find manifested in the Swami Vivekananda. And upon us also, the humble disciples of the Master, the full implications of this idea began gradually to dawn. The Master and the Swamiji are really one ; the one spirit as it were, manifested in twin personalities. What we find in the Master in the form of a seed, becomes fully developed in Swamiji. Swamiji is to Sree Ramakrishna what the commentary is to the Vedanta Sutras. The one is complementary to the other. They are in fact inseparable—the obverse and the reverse of the same coin—Sree Ramakrishna was like an ocean of high idealism ; and whoever went to him became filled with what he wanted according to his capacity and receptivity. If we can constantly keep in our minds those liberal ideas which the Master and the Swamiji so fondly cherished and developed in themselves and can think over them always we can make ourselves free from

all trace of sectarianism, bigotry and intolerance which have become the pests of our religious and social life.

Sree Ramakrishna one day cried aloud from the house-top for those young enthusiasts who were to come to him and pour forth their life's offerings on the altar of his service, and they came. But that cry has not ended there ; it is still ringing through the air and shall continue for aeons. Many have come after that, many are still coming and many more will come in future. Ours were the days of the high-tide of spiritual bliss—when life was one incessant round of prayer, religious discussion, hymn-singing and ecstasy. By churning the ocean of Sree Ramakrishna's life we then drank the nectar of an incessant flow of spirituality. O the days of high fervour in the temple garden of Dakshineswar ! We lived in a dreamland, as it were. But you his later followers shall now have to drink the remaining portion of the cup of nectar to the dregs : For us the nectar unalloyed—for you the nectar with the poison ! By taking this poison you will now have to be *Nila-Kanthas*,\* every one of you. In a country full of wide-spread ignorance and deepening misery all around you should be prepared to forsake all the joy and colour of a higher life of pure God-intoxication and instead take upon yourselves the heavy burden of all the shame and sorrow that lie like a black pall over your country to-day and devote every moment of your life to the rebirth of a better, happier world. Be like Shiva, who ceased to have any personal consideration when he was besought by the Devas to save them from the danger of the poison that came out of the churning. The country looks up to you—

\* The reference is to the story in the Hindu mythology in which the gods and demons are said to have once engaged themselves in churning the ocean with a view to partaking of the nectar that lay hid therein. The desired nectar came out by the churning but was followed by a gush of the most deadly poison. The participants in their embarrassment invoked Mahadev—the God of gods to save them from the evil effects of the poison which he thereupon readily drank off and assimilated. But the poison left a blue mark on Shiva's throat wherefrom he was called Nila-kantha i.e. blue-throated.

ye the choicest youths of the nation,—and shall not you respond to the cries of agony constantly ringing in the ears? Can you think of retiring to a solitary corner and living all by yourselves? Can you think of personal joy and bliss when millions of your brothers and sisters are rolling about in misery and ignorance? —Certainly not, you cannot do that ; you must not do that. A very great responsibility rests on you—you who have come round the banner of our Master and our Leader. You must be prepared to sacrifice everything to do the least service to this motherland of ours. Remember always the trust which the Swamiji has left to you and have faith in his assurance that the Master and himself are ever with you in the fulfilment of that noble task. Faith opens up the fountains of inspiration, of infinite strength and courage. Have that faith therefore and you will never feel miserable for any personal want or shortcomings ; every thing will then be given unto you. Swamiji was ready to devote a million lives to the service of his motherland—can't you do one? Have firm conviction that a divine power is always behind you and plunge headlong into the ocean of activity. But always be careful that the holy sanctuary of your heart be not made the seat of the base 'Ego.' The moment the 'I' intrudes into the sanctuary which is for the Deity, that very moment every thing is gone—the fountain of strength and inspiration is blocked up again.

There is another thing which you must always guard yourself against and of this the Swamiji—our leader—constantly reminded us : That it is the small deeds done in secret that go to determine a man's character. The desire to do great acts sometimes fattens the ego and becomes the cause of one's ruin. Do not therefore think of doing a very great act and of showing yourselves in the public eye. Do not look to men for approbation or even for encouragement ; always look up to God for inspiration and guidance, for cheer and encouragement. It is easy to do loud deeds in a city where one can easily attract public notice and praise. But there are greater and far more important things to do where there is none to applaud you, none to encourage you, none even to help you. and where

there is no end to misery and helpless suffering. Go ye there, and devote inch by inch the whole of your life and sadhana, throw into those dark corners and alleys what light and leading you have received from the Master and the Swamiji and lay down tracks which others may follow. If you can do that at the risk of your very life even, then only I shall say that you have rightly caught the strain of Swamiji's thought-forces and set yourself to the task left by him.

I have kept you long enough and before I finish, I only want to mingle my feeble accents with the trumpet blast of Swamiji's voice and cry out to you, my sons,—'Arise, awake and stop not till the Goal is reached.' The demon of poverty and ignorance is fast eating into the vitals of the nation, there is no time for sloth or hesitation. Stand up and march ahead.

Lastly, as the joyous notes of devotional music filled the air with their exquisite melody, all that was of the earth earthy seemed to melt away, a new world of light and bliss, outlined in the words of the Swamis took concrete shape, as it were, before the vision of the audience, and amidst harmony within and without the Convention came to a close.

#### **Evening (7 p.m. to 10 p.m.)**

##### **A DRAMATIC ENTERTAINMENT.**

At about 7 o'clock in the evening of this day the guests and inmates of the Math were seen again to crowd at the pandal to witness the histrionic performance by Sjt. Murari Mohan Mukherjee of the Binapani Natya-mandir of Bally (Howrah). The performance was really a treat. The young artist played one entire drama

) and a comic opera (**श्यामसुन्दर**) without any co-actor, himself impersonating all the various characters in them. The abrupt and quick changes of mood and

tone brought on in the course of the dialogues were things difficult to render and the high order of excellence displayed by the actor in this respect did not fail to draw out applause from the audience.

**Thursday, April 8th, Afternoon (2-45 p.m. to 6 p.m.)**

### AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING.

This account will remain incomplete, if we fail to record the proceedings of a public meeting that took place in the afternoon of the 8th April. This meeting was the result of the endeavours of the Reception Committee to arrange for some interesting discourses by experts calculated to be of educative value to the assembled workers of the Mission as well as to the general public.

The meeting was presided over by Swami Srivasananda, who in his introductory remarks dwelt upon the spirit of "Seva-Dharma" and its practical value in different spheres of life both to the doer and to the receiver. He also pointed out that to serve the country effectively one should possess a comprehensive knowledge of the conditions under which one has to work as also of the means which can best be employed for the benefit of the people. He said: India lives in villages and her life-blood is in agriculture, but unfortunately this is the very thing that has been long neglected, with the result that the country is now overtaken by widespread ignorance, poverty and disease. Persons engaged in serving India, therefore, have before them a very huge task at the present moment. To be equal to the most urgent of all needs, viz., education and re-organisation of the villages and improvement of

village sanitation and agriculture, workers have first of all to be fired with an earnestness and zeal that should know no abatement and ought to be thoroughly equipped with all necessary informations and means to fight out the evils, before they plunge into the struggle heart and soul.

The President next introduced one after another the different speakers and named the subjects they were to lecture upon. The following papers were then presented before the meeting :—

*“Some practical aspects of Social Service”*.—By Dr. D. N. Maitra, Secretary, Bengal Social Service League.

“पल्लौ संगठन” “Village Reconstruction in Bengal” — By Dr. S. L. Sarkar, Civil Surgeon, Noakhali.

“वाङ्गालाय कृषिर उन्नति” “Agricultural Improvement in Bengal”.—By Nirmal Deb Esq., District Agricultural Officer, 24-Perganas.

*“Epidemic Diseases and Social Service”*.—By Dr G. C. Chatterjee of Calcutta.

The last lecture, as previously announced, was to have been illustrated with Bioscopic films, and the speaker, Dr. Chatterjee, while he was addressing the meeting and was expecting the necessary instruments to be sent over as arranged from Calcutta, received a message that the growing fury of the Hindu-Moslem riots in the city made it impossible to carry them to Belur that evening. He therefore delivered a shorter lecture than he had intended and simply read out the paper he had in his possession. The news of the riots had further a panicky effect upon all those who came from Calcutta and created some commotion in the meeting. The

President at this point rose and with a few words of appreciation and thanks to the speakers, declared the meeting closed.

One more incident to note in connection with the proceedings of this meeting. Brahmachari Satya Chaitanya of Narayanganj (Dacca), the painter of the map in colours already referred to showing the ramifications of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in India and abroad, was presented with a set of valuable books on behalf of the Convention.

## CHAPTER III.

### PAPERS READ AT THE CONVENTION.

We have marked in the foregoing Chapter the proceedings of the Convention from day to day till the last. The idea of the Convention was now an accomplished fact, and left its promoters and participants to take note of what benefit they may have done to the cause and to themselves by heartily joining the long-drawn proceedings and thus bringing to the sessions the success that attended them all through. And from what appears on the face of it, we may safely presume that a full sense and consciousness of the serious responsibilities that the members are called upon to bear in life by mustering round the banner of Sri Ramakrishna, has been more intimately brought home to all by this momentous occasion—the first in the annals of the Brotherhood.

The idea of such a Convention has nothing new or original in it. The root of it reaches far and deep into the dim past. In fact all movements and organisations in all spheres of life and in all ages and climes have found it necessary to hold such conferences and conventions to muster the straggling forces, to intensify and revivify the collective consciousness and to consolidate the organisation in order to carry the ideal more effectively into practice. In the case of religious movements, this has been a very successful method adopted and tried many a time by Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity; and the Rāmakrishna Mission by holding this Convention has trodden the same old path, as was pointed out by

Swami Saradananda in his address of welcome. The observations made by Swami Akhandananda in his Presidential address at the third day's public meeting also dwelt upon this point. He traced the Convention back to the Vedic times and referred to the Conferences called by Maharshi Veda-Vyasa. Coming down to more historic times, we have the Buddhist Councils and the Synods of the early Christians convened evidently to consolidate the respective systems of religion on surer bases and to instil new vigour and energy into the zeal of the monks and missionaries for preaching work.

The movement originating with Sri Ramakrishna, a unique personality in the history of mankind, is one which the world in its present crisis stands so much in need of. It is in fact a movement that has been ushered into existence by the very soul of humanity. And it seems, it is time for us to be fully awake to the significance of it and devote ourselves heart and soul to the realisation in our individual lives and a wider propagation at home and abroad of those universal ideals of harmony, love and co-operation which the movement stands for—ideals calculated to bring about the fulfilment of the destiny of mankind. This Convention has thus done a great service by furnishing Sri Ramakrishna's disciples, followers and admirers with an opportunity to meet together to compare notes of what has been done in the past to fulfil the great purpose and to deliberate on the future line of action to be adopted by the Mission.

But quite apart from this, the Convention has further given an occasion to the general public, who, we believe, are interested in all that concerns the movement, to hear from some of its best and authoritative exponents about

the ideas and ideals the organisation has been striving to carry into practice. The Reception Committee of the Convention had therefore done the right thing at the right time to select the "Ideas, Ideals and Activities of the Ramakrishna Mission," and "Religion and Philosophy in the light of the Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda" as the subjects for the first two public meetings of the Convention. And the paper presented before the Convention by Swami Saradananda, one of the few surviving pioneers of the movement, and those by Principal Kamakhyanath Mitra and some others on these two subjects will facilitate a correct study of the ideas and activities of the Order in detail. There are also those few special papers read before the extraordinary public meeting held in connection with the Convention, which are no less important and valuable considering the subjects they dwell upon—subjects containing reflections which are the best fruits of the writers' life-long study and experience. In the present Chapter, therefore, we propose to put before our readers all these papers in the order in which they were read.

Before concluding this note we feel constrained to draw the attention of our readers to a very important and relevant point regarding the movement initiated by the Ramakrishna Mission. For lack of a comprehensive grasp and clear understanding of the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission and the various methods it has chosen to adopt, many people seem to be under the impression that the movement started by the Mission is nothing short of the gradual rise of a new religious sect. Any apprehension like this, we take this occasion to bring home to all, is absolutely unfounded and amounts to

doing the greatest injustice to the cause. The Ramakrishna Mission, we solemnly declare, cannot be called a sect in the sense in which it is popularly understood. But if by a sect be meant a group of persons upholding certain principles whose one object is to bring about harmony and co-operation among the jarring creeds and doctrines of the world, then the Ramakrishna Mission feels proud to call itself a sect. A close review of the ideas, ideals and activities of the Mission and also of the philosophy behind this movement, as expounded here in this volume and on other occasions elsewhere, will make its position clear in relation to the many sects, creeds and religions existing in the world. Indeed, the very characteristic feature of the movement is the synthetising attitude made manifest through its varied activities in thought and life. And this attitude, it should clearly be understood, is no colourless syncretism and uncritical acceptance. It is not an attempt at a unification which is another name for a dead level of uniformity and a negation of all distinguishing marks, but is a positive attempt at harmonisation which concedes all differences in details and at the same time tries to co-ordinate them all so as to make them serve the grand common purpose in the life of humanity. And we take this opportunity to impress upon all once again the fact that, if the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement has any claim on public co-operation it is because of this synthetising attitude which is its leading characteristic and which constitutes the strength of the claim.

This message of harmony is the great need of the present age, for it is through this message that a collective life in the country is to be organised. This message is the sacred trust of the Ramakrishna Mission for the well-

being of the people and not for the advancement of any sectarian interest. May God help us in our endeavour to awaken the country from its spiritual torpor and prepare the ground for a future the glory of which will be worthy of our past !

## THE IDEAS, IDEALS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION.

By SWAMI SARADANANDA

Will or nill, man from his very birth finds himself concerned, confronted and conjoined always with two mysterious, vast, indefinite objects—the internal and the external world, or to speak more accurately, with two sets of phenomena, of which, learning in time to get a collective outlook, he comes to a sort of indefinite knowledge of the existence of two separate worlds, the internal and the external, and finds them acting and reacting on each other through him. His body, his mind and his ego forming part and parcel of them both, he finds himself to be the mysterious joining point or the connecting link between the two.

Proceeding in time to search and find out the truth about them, he sees naturally that two paths of inquiry are open to him, the subjective and the objective. And the former of these seeming nearer and more likely to lead him to truth, he begins to advance rapidly through it. Know thy own Self, know That by knowing which you will know the mystery of everything in this universe,—became the motto at this time throughout the then civilised world. The old Vedic Rishis, Krishna and Buddha in India, Laotze in China, Socrates in Greece, Jesus Christ in Jerusalem and many others in Egypt and other countries, joined in the quest and gave from time to time the results of their researches in what knowledge the human race possesses of Philosophy and Metaphysics. Considering well what little objective knowledge mankind had at

the time, they came to the conclusion that it would never be possible to know the ultimate reality through that path and took to the lines of deep meditation, of self-introspection and self-control to reach the goal. The terms in which they expressed the ultimate reality after realisation, however, come so near to and are so much alike one another that they lead us to think that each one of the great ancient seers must have arrived exactly at the same point of the mental plane to get such a similar view of the underlying Truth or Reality. Ancient history records the fact that all these great seers of old, Krishna, Buddha, Socrates, Jesus and others, used to dive so deep within themselves while following the introspective method of meditation, that they used to have trances, or that they forgot the existence of the outside world and of their own body during the time. It appears also from them that India used to be ahead of other countries in following this subjective path.

The sum and substance of the results obtained by the old seers at different times may be summed up as follows : That the ego in man is but a limited expression of the permanent part of him, the Soul or Self or Atman or Brahman ; that the Atman or Brahman is the unlimited universal substratum of everything and therefore it is one without a second ; that the highest illumination is attained on realising one's oneness with this Atman or ultimate reality ; that the impersonal Atman or Brahman appears to us as the universe and the personal God in our attempts to look to It through our limited mind and intellect. These results of course were obtained by following the method for many many centuries, of which history gives us but a very imperfect record. In the meantime the objective knowledge of the human race went on increasing and accumulating, and the advance of trade and commerce brought in facilities for interchange and spread of thoughts and ideas.

The historians of the West give us the idea that the attempt to reach the Truth by the objective method was not resorted to by the human race until a little after the

Renaissance, when the human mind found itself free for the first time from its old moorings in Europe. The writings of the distinguished European authors of that period and a little after that time, e.g., the *Novum Organum* of Lord Bacon, they cite as testifying the fact. However true it might be for the Western countries, India has a different account of her own on this point. The Western savants have not yet been able to find how old the civilisation of India is, in spite of their different assertions about it from time to time. They have been compelled to push it back several thousand years by the findings of certain excavations quite recently made in some parts of Western India, and it seems possible that they will have to alter their present conclusions also in time. It is best for us, therefore, to hold fast to the old traditions prevalent in the country and to the records which our scriptures and old books supply us on the point.

The Swami Vivekananda seemed to hold the opinion that Indian civilisation was the oldest on the globe, and that all other countries were indebted to the Vedas of India for the idea of the immortality of the Soul of man and Its oneness with the ultimate Reality underlying the universe. We can have our own opinions regarding the same and wait to accept it until it has been proved clearly by the evidence of history. But the great strides that India made of old to develop her objective knowledge proves clearly the fact that far from ignoring it she used to pursue it with great zeal in almost every direction, centuries before the Renaissance in Europe. Her researches with plants and metals in the field of medicine, her surgery and astronomy, her theory of creation of the universe from atoms and speculations regarding the nature of them, as are to be found in the Vaishesika philosophy, her methods of ship-building and navigation and the principles for organised, successful government of a country, as are to be found in her old books, all tend to prove the fact.

Liberty of thought and action was never put down by law in old India, in the field of religion and philosophy or in pursuing one's research in any kind of knowledge. What they

wanted strictly from every individual of the community was to subscribe to the rules and customs of society, and to the belief in the sanctity and the truth of the records of super-conscious experiences of the great seers, that are to be found in the Vedas, and especially in the Vedanta part of it. And it seems that this belief in the authority of the Vedas arose after the nation had found repeatedly convincing proofs about it in the lives of the devotees who had followed them with sincere and earnest zeal, and after the attainment of the supreme stage of super-consciousness had been rendered into a perfect science by the religious leaders. Thus we find knowledge divided principally into two main divisions, the *Parâ* and the *aparâ*—the higher, by which the unlimited, ultimate Reality or the absolute, unchangeable Truth could be realised, and the lower, by which relative truths regarding all objects within the boundaries of time, space and causation—music, painting, sculpture, architecture, in short everything—were gained.

In Europe and the far West, where the end of the subjective path had not been attained, the Renaissance brought in a terrible reaction. Everything relating to the subjective method was thrown overboard, and the educated lost all faith in religion and the super-conscious state. Rebellion against the church and the priests became the order everywhere, and the society went through convulsions, the like of which they had never seen before. The objective method of realising truths was then resorted to with all avidity and was taken up as the panacea for all evils.

History has recorded the fact that pursuance of the objective method brings material prosperity in its train. India had been the centre of that prosperity for a long time. That centre changed now to Europe and the Western countries after they had followed that path for a few centuries. The ranks of society in them became gradually divided and established from now on individual rights and on money basis, and material prosperity at any cost became the motto of the European nations. Wealth and prosperity overflowed the

countries, but in place of peace and contentment brought in an unbounded desire for gain and power and made the struggle for existence keener every day. The discontent went on increasing and began to express itself from time to time in various parts of Europe, through more and more demands of the people for individual and collective rights. It beheaded kings, overthrew empires, spread the horrors of revolution in France and other countries, and still the people thought they were advancing in the right direction towards a higher civilisation and to ever-lasting peace through respecting the rights of one another. Even women caught the contagion and ranged themselves against men in suffragette bands and tried to wrest from them more privileges and rights for their sex! Until at last came the Great War and proved the utter futility of basing society and civilisation on the ideals on which they had been building so long.

However much we may extol the objective method hypnotised by the glamour of the material prosperity of the Western civilisation, we shall have to admit the fact that nowhere has it yet enabled man to reach the ultimate Reality and thereby attain to everlasting peace and contentment by controlling the desires of the flesh. In ancient India the objective method was followed with vigour, but was never allowed to delude the mind with its undue importance and to transcend its boundaries. With due respect for the path, it was always confined to its own place of discovering relative truths and laws and the applications of them to make human life rich and comfortable. But the basic principles of individual, social and national life were always taken from the great conclusions arrived at by following the subjective method. Self-control was the foundation on which life's whole structure rested, and the ranks in society were measured and divided by that unit of standard. Money and the comforts of life had their value, but a life of renunciation for a noble ideal was regarded much higher and commanded the esteem of all grades of society. Thus poverty had never been the stumbling-block to the recognition of one's greatness

in society, and "plain living and high thinking" was always held up as the ideal. Then again the doctrine of Karma and reincarnation—that we are reaping the results of what we sowed in our former incarnation and will have to reap in our next birth what we are sowing in this—kept the people from being discontented with their own lot and getting jealous of their neighbours. And above all, the rules for regulating the daily life of the individual and society were always framed with the view that they might rise higher gradually and be fitted in future for a life of perfect self-control and renunciation that are necessary for realising the Atman within or the ultimate Reality.

The outlook and consideration of human life and its different activities from the two standpoints of absolute and relative Reality enabled them to set a proper value on things and events and warded off the danger that came through an over-estimate of them. Thus comprising and combining the subjective with the objective view of things, the *Pâramârthika* with the *Vyâvahârika*, the Ideal grew and became clear in men's minds. And the way too, was found by which all kinds of Karma could be made to lead both the individual and the community to the realisation of the goal, the super-conscious state.

Times there were when by the attractions of the flesh and the self-forgetfulness and vanity which material power and prosperity bring, the people were led astray from this ideal of life, but the Lord has always been kind to India and in His mercy has always kept His promise to the people to reincarnate Himself when needed for the re-establishment of righteousness. The Great Ones whom India has been worshipping all along as incarnations of the Deity—from the dreaded Rama with the terrible axe, to Krishna, Buddha, Sankara and others, have everyone of them appeared at such critical periods in the national life of India and have either brought the people back to the ideal of renunciation or helped them to proceed towards that Ideal by removing the hindrances that have obstructed their path. Thus the ship of the national

life in India had been sailing through rough and calm waters in its voyage to find the safe haven in the "eternal Rock of Ages," the absolute Reality in and beyond the universe, protected by the all-merciful hand of Providence, until the time came for its facing the roughest weather of all after the great Sankara had left its helm in other hands.

Vast and various were the evils that had entered into the body of the nation when Sankara began his reform work during the period of the downfall of Buddhism. It seems that the preachers of that religion had had to lower their ideal in many places to bring nations of Northern Asia with little or no ethical standard whatsoever into the fold. They had to compromise truth with half-truths, the pure light of religion and renunciation with the prevalent local customs, habits and superstitions. Thus the enormous and extensive spread of that religion was then made at the cost of its intense spirit of sacrifice for what was true and noble. The infirmities of the adherents had gradually entered the ranks of the teachers, and in time the people and the preachers of India also had been affected with the same evils by their communication with them. Increase of inter-marriage had produced among the people a great many mixed or sub-castes in different grades of development, and it became a question of time and spread of culture to weld them into one homogeneous whole. Rules were then framed for not going outside of India to prevent this medley of confusion getting worse. But they could not prevent the coming over and frequent invasions of the sturdy barbarian hordes of Chins, Huns, Sakas and the rest who had been living in Middle and Northern Asia. Many of these conquerors settled in India and made the problem of uniting the people into one nation more complex.

And before the country had time to settle those internal affairs and establish itself firmly as before on the Vedic Ideals, in came the invasion of the Yavanas or the Greeks, and a little later, of the Pathans and the Moghuls. And the dark age for India was complete after the downfall of the great Moghul wher

the supremacy of the country was partly handed over to the British power and partly wrested by it from the native chiefs.

Bound hand and foot, despoiled of all her wealth, power and knowledge by foreign hands, hypnotised by material power and the false glamour of the two-days' material civilisation of the West, in abject misery lies She, the Queen adored of nations, the mother of heroes and spiritual giants, nay, of God-Men, who had rendered holy this little planet of ours by using it as their foot-stool—She who had helped her neighbours with religion, knowledge, both subjective and objective, and had never spread devastation and ruin in other lands in the name of conquest! And is there no hope, none whatever? And has the God of India forgotten her and His promise to her of old? The night darkened, and the bonds tightened more than ever! And sometime in 1836, in going to determine the kind of culture and education that should be given her children to enable them to free Her and raise Her to her former glory, it was settled that Western education, imparted through the medium of the English language, would be the best under the circumstances! Aye, even the genius of Raja Ram Mohan Ray subscribed to introduce that foreign language, and as the Swami Vivekananda said, "helped to set the nation back for fifty years or more thereby! The country would have received the Western method of education and the objective sciences of the West in a few years, had he but translated the Western books into Sanskrit and made that language the medium of instruction."

But God in His mercy for poor India heard Her prayers! And the 17th February of that same year (1836) saw the birth of that personality in a wayside village in Bengal, who by his unique realisations in the field of religion and unforeseen spiritual powers helped to convince the people of the country of the greatness of the old Indian Ideal and directed the national bark from proceeding any further towards the rocks and sands of the materialistic civilisation of the West. Without getting any aid from the much vaunted education of modern times, he by his innate spiritual powers saw light

where the best of the book-educated university-men of the day found only darkness. From the high transcendental super-conscious plane in which he passed his days, the absolute Self, God, the Soul of man, and their relation with one another, the object of creation, of human life and its activities, and the way by which that object is best fulfilled—appeared to him as clear as daylight. And he used to talk about those things incessantly to all who gathered round him, in such a simple language and with such pointed similes, aphorisms and parables, that the meaning becoming clear and palpable to everyone, would touch and carry impression into the hearts of all. We shall take the opportunity of telling you here what the Swami Vivekananda thought about this towering personality and the ideal that has been manifested in and through his godly life for the benefit of India and humanity at large.

"Many times in the past had India passed through downfalls which had left her stunned and bewildered, and the God of India had for as many times protected and restored life and vigour into her by manifesting Himself unto her in His mercy. But those past downfalls appear light and trivial, compared with the depths to which she has fallen at present. Never had this holy land been enveloped before with such a long night of deep and dismal misery. But it is almost over now, and soon will its darkness wane before the radiant rays of dawn.

"And the re-awakening of the country will be in proportion to this unprecedented fall, and the mighty manifestation of strength and vigour of the present rise will put all the past revivals into insignificance. They will be shorn of their glory and importance as stars before the sun.

"For, to teach people the religion practised by the Aryans and to show them the common ground of unity among the apparently divided sects that, coming into existence in different times and places and with different social rules and customs, lie scattered all over the country and are quarrelling always with one another regarding the principles of religion, and yet all of which go by the common name of Hinduism—

the Lord has manifested Himself again as Sri Ramakrishna. Yea, holding within himself the realisations of the Sanatana Dharma of the Vedas, the principles of which on application were found to be true for all times and places, he has appeared in this new incarnation as the living embodiment of the eternal and universal religion itself for the benefit of humanity.

"To prove that the super-conscious knowledge that is ever existent in the Lord, reveals itself always to the perfectly pure in spirit, even though devoid of all book-learning, and that the scriptures are true in as much as they are the records of the same, he has in this incarnation risen to that knowledge through faith in God and purity, discarding all help that any form of book-learning can give.

"In this present dispensation suited to the age underlies the source of infinite good for India, as well as for the whole world ; and the founder of it, Sri Ramakrishna, is the reformed and remodelled manifestation of all the great Masters of religion of the past. O man, have faith in this..... From the worship of the dead past we invite you to the worship of the living present."

Nowhere in the past history of the world have we come across the fact of any of the great teachers of religion trying to find out what truth there is in the various paths through which men are travelling towards the religious goals, since the dawn of religion and religious ideas in this planet of ours. Sri Ramakrishna alone had the inclination and boldness to try the same in our time, by taking initiation from the professed teachers of almost all the prevalent great religions of the world, Hinduism, Mahomedanism and Christianity, one after another, realising the goal of one before proceeding to realise the goal of the others. And the results of his research have tolled the death-knell of all religious intolerance and bigotry that have filled men and nations with hatred towards one another.

The realisations of Sri Ramakrishna can be summed up briefly as follows—

(a) Every sincere devotee of any religion whatsoever will

have to pass through the three stages of dualism, qualified monism and ultimately monism.

- (b) As all jackals howl in the same pitch, so all devotees of any religion whatsoever have declared in the past and will continue to do so in future, their oneness with the Deity on realising the heights of monism.
- (c) That there need not be any quarrel between dualism, qualified monism and monism, for each comes in turn to every devotee in accordance with the growth and development of his spiritual life.
- (d) The positive part of every religion, in which are found the way and the method of procedure through that, as well as the goal which its sincere follower would reach in the end—is true. But the negative, which speaks of punishment and damnation, eternal or otherwise, for the straggler, is not so, being added to the former for keeping the members of the community from deserting and straying to other folds.
- (e) That religion can be transmitted to others by will and touch by the great teachers.
- (f) In the Sanatana Dharma of the Vedanta are to be found the eternal principles and laws that govern every single manifestation of religion in a particular time, place and environment.
- (g) Stick to your own religion, and think that the followers of other religions are coming to the same goal through different paths.

Thus the Ideal suited to the age was completed after twelve long years of unheard of struggle, and renunciation, and the Great Master knew that at last the time was ripe for the coming of those who would get the direct touch of his spirit and carry the Ideal everywhere in India and abroad. They came, and he knew each one of them as if he was long acquainted with them. And to the one whom he chose to make the leader of them all, when he said how he had been

waiting impatiently to meet him, for he had come to know that the Divine Mother would make him the instrument to perform Her great work of uplifting India and other countries —he could not believe on account of the sceptical spirit of western education which he had imbibed before. Strange as it is, it is not the first time that we have heard of such things about the great Masters of religion. Sankara, Chaitanya and others did the same, and Jesus not only knew his disciples, but said when he met Peter, "Upon this rock shall I build my temple!"

So the Master went on training those young men and left them in 1886, giving directions to the leader, the Swami Vivekananda, for the spread of his great message. Gentlemen, I need not enter into great details, henceforth. You all know how, fired with love for their great Master and zeal for his message, this little band of young, energetic workers, without a single piece of copper in their pocket, went barefooted almost all over India, knowing not what to eat or where to lie down, month after month and year after year : how the great message spread itself gradually ; how in 1893 the Swami Vivekananda went to America to represent Hinduism in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago ; how by the inscrutable ways of the Divine Mother, the object of that august assembly was turned at it were and made to suit and serve the purpose of the advent of the Swami before the public and the glory of Hinduism ; and how winning laurel after laurel for Mother India and Hinduism in America and England, he returned to India in 1897 and started the Ramakrishna Mission.

The Swami started the Mission at first with both lay and monastic disciples of the Master. But the former took little interest in it after a year or two, and ultimately all the work of the Mission was transferred into the hands of the monks of this Math. The Mission was started by the Swami for spreading the religious Ideal of Sri Ramakrishna by interpreting the scriptures in the light of the great Master's life and realisations and with his idea of service to humanity looking upon human beings as images of God, nay as God Himself.

So preaching and philanthropic activities were the two main divisions of the Mission. But what the Swami wanted of each one of us was to do the works of those two divisions in the spirit of Karma-Yoga or perfect unselfishness by idealising not only the work itself but the men and women also, with whom we come in contact in the course of its performance and for whom we do it, as the Deity Himself. But how to preach, teach and serve if we give up the idea that they need them? And the answer is that your scripture teaches you not only to look upon the Deity as perfect, but to do so with regard to every part of Him.

What if He has preferred to appear before you as imperfect—as sick and miserable and ignorant and starving—to give you the opportunity of getting yourself benefited by serving Him in those shapes? Thus we shall have to do the preaching, teaching and serving in that light. It will protect us from getting vain with the idea of our own importance in going to help others, and make us more and more unselfish as we go on doing the work in that spirit, and will enable us ultimately, to realise the Vedanta idea that the Universe and every bit of it is God and nothing but God. No work is good or bad in itself, but the motive with which we proceed to do it makes it so. The same work which brings bondage upon bondage when we go to do it with selfish motives, frees and makes us rise higher and higher when we do it with perfectly unselfish motives and with no idea of gain to us, even of name and fame.

Thus the Ramakrishna Mission, gentlemen, teaches us to do all works with the highest of motives. Are you a householder? Then look upon your wife and children as images of God and serve them with your whole heart. Are you a monk? Then look upon all human beings as incarnations of God and serve with all your might, and it will help you to rise to the super-conscious state. Are you a patriot? Then give up all petty jealousies and heart-burnings which limit your vision, and work incessantly to make your country really great by helping to stand on what is true and noble. Thus to reach the super-conscious goal by renunciation and service and to help others

to do the same, are what the Mission teaches every one of us. To teach men to stand firm on the Ideal that has been given to us as our precious inheritance by Sri Ramakrishna, and then to learn and apply the relative truths that the West has discovered to improve the material condition of India—are what the Mission enjoins on every one of us.

Such, gentlemen, is the Ideal of the Ramakrishna Mission, and such the ideas which it wants to work out for the good of humanity. May He, whose unique spiritual life is the inspiring Ideal of the Mission and he, who has shown us how to apply that Ideal practically into our daily lives, bless us and give us light and strength to follow in their footsteps for the real welfare of India and our own selves.

## THE IDEALS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION.\*

BY PRINCIPAL KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A.

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It is in obedience to the wishes of His Holiness the Swami Shivananda Maharaj, the head of the Ramkrishna Math and Mission, that I venture to rise before you this afternoon to offer a few observations on the aims, ideals and activities of the Mission and at the same time to place before you a few suggestions for its expansion and improvement. I feel it a rare privilege to participate in the deliberations of this august assembly for a parallel to which we cannot think of anything less than the first Buddhist Council convened at Rajgriha in the remote past immediately after the *mahaparinirvana* of Lord Gautama of hallowed memory. The parallel cannot be to anything less than this, for it is my deliberate conviction that Ramkrishna and Vivekananda are the heralds of a new era in the history of mankind such as Lord Buddha was about two

\* English version of the paper read in Bengalee.

millenniums and a half ago. It is they who have revealed to me the Truth which I "searched with many sighs" and that I am proud to call myself a Hindu to-day is due entirely to their message and lives. They it is who have instilled a new spirit into the palsied heart of Hinduism—and I firmly believe that if the Hindu wants to rise again after centuries of torpor then he will have to stand under the banner unfurled by Ramkrishna and Vivekananda. The religion of the Hindu can be a living reality exactly in proportion to the inspiration he derives from their example. The centres of their creative energy are these Maths and this Mission. As long as these will remain healthy and strong, the Hindu will hold his head high, his life will vigorously grow, he will be in the vanguard of civilisation and confer untold benefits on mankind by distributing his spiritual wealth from one end of the world to the other, irrespective of caste, colour and creed. It is this duty that he discharged in the past. Earth-grabbing and exploitation never besmirched his name.

The signs are very hopeful indeed. Only thirty-two years have elapsed since the memorable session of the world's Parliament of Religions at Chicago ; yet already not only a few Vedanta Societies have been established in America but a veritable Hindu Temple at San Francisco is an accomplished fact. Here is the first missionary enterprise of the genuine Hindu outside India since the close of the era of Buddhist missions. A momentous event like this has not happened in the history of Hindustan in the course of about a millennium and a half. Hundreds of men and women in the western world have embraced with enthusiasm the doctrines of Ramkrishna-Vivekananda and after the passing away of the illustrious Swami his fellow-monks and disciples have been preaching the Religion Eternal in the West with a zeal which is the admiration of the world. This propaganda in foreign countries is what the Swami called his Foreign Policy. How inestimable is its international value is known to all acquainted with the reports and organs of the Ramkrishna Mission.

Such extensive and intensive propagation of a faith in a

period so brief beats all record in history. No political power stands behind this missionary movement such as stood behind the spread of Buddhism and Christianity. It has never had to depend on any aid that is extraneous and adventitious. It stands firmly on its own feet and is great in its own glory. The secret of its expansion is its inherent strength. That tremendous spiritual force which, manifested in the previous *avatars*, revivified India age after age whenever a danger was impending, manifested itself once more in Ramkrishna-Vivekananda to raise her from a fall before which all her previous falls shrink into insignificance. The centre of this spiritual force is the Ramkrishna Math, the nursery and training-ground of learned Brahmacharins and Sannyasins of a character bold and intrepid—Brahmacharins and Sannyasins who through the grand organisation of the Ramkrishna Mission are foremost in the service of humanity. In its wider sense the Mission includes all the Maths and Ashrams with their propagandistic activities but in its narrower sense it means only those institutions, educational and philanthropic, so well known to the world. Though no hard-and-fast line of demarcation is drawn between the Maths and the Mission, yet the distinction just noted we had better bear in mind to be able to understand the relation between the Maths proper and the Mission as it is ordinarily understood. The soul of the Mission in its narrower sense is the Math and the soul of the country lies in the educational and philanthropic institutions of the Mission. The future of the country is quite assured as long as the ideals of the Maths and the institutions of the Mission remain unimpaired. This is the Domestic Policy of the great Swami Vivekananda. His Foreign Policy and Domestic Policy together constitute what the spiritual hero has designated his Plan of Campaign. It is for the worthy monks who have renounced all and dedicated their lives to the cause of their Master to discuss the internal affairs of the Maths and Ashrams. It will be my endeavour to discuss everything else in connection with the Ramkrishna Mission.

Though my proper subject is as stated above, yet I may

be permitted to say this much about the Maths and Ashrams that these noble institutions are very efficiently conducted. Competent Sannyasins are skilfully trained here for preaching the message of their Master at home and abroad. The Brahmacharins and Sannyasins belonging to these Ashrams are very ably editing the excellent Bengali monthly, *Udbodhan* and the excellent English monthlies, *Prabuddha Bharata* and the *Vedanta Kesari*. They are also editing the *Morning Star*, an English weekly and three more papers in three different Indian vernaculars, namely, the *Samanvaya* in Hindi, the *Prabuddha Keralam* in Malayalam and *Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam* in Tamil. Besides, they have already created and are still creating a vast religious literature which to many is the solace of life and solace of death. Knowledge is assiduously cultivated in the Maths and Ashrams, the libraries attached to them are steadily expanding, and I have every reason to believe that these libraries will soon assume dimensions large enough to fully satisfy the intellectual needs of the monks and neophytes. Outside India five chief centres have been opened at New York, San Francisco, La Crescenza, Boston and Portland in America with several branches affiliated to them and one such Ashrama has also been established at Kuala Lumpur in the Federated Malay States, another quarter of the globe. At Boston,\* the Athens of America, is published the *Message of the East*, an ably conducted monthly periodical and it is the Boston Centre again that publishes many books and pamphlets on the Vedanta philosophy. The achievement of the Ashrams so far is very gratifying no doubt and cannot but fill every Hindu heart with pride and joy, but still a great deal more has to be done as otherwise the need of India and the world will not be fully satisfied.

From the propagandistic side of the Ramkrishna Mission I come now to its humanitarian activities which have proved such a blessing to the country. The Maths or the Ashrams are meant exclusively for the Brahmacharins and Sannyasins

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\* Now at La Crescenza.

but this branch of the Mission is a department open to all. The chief function of the Sannyasins here is to co-operate with the laymen, to keep constantly before their eyes the true ethics of work—the lofty ideals of renunciation and service, to educate them in system and method and after taking the initiative to see that everything passes smoothly ; or, in other words, to put it in a nutshell, the aim of the Mission is to build up a nation of strong and selfless character through the discipline of true work. The humanitarian activities of the Mission are of two kinds. Under the first head comes the work of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and nursing the sick and under the second head that of imparting sound education on a religious and moral basis to the youths and maidens of the country and also affording regular help to the poor and deserving students. Under the first head again there are two sub-heads—permanent institutions and temporary measures. Of the permanent institutions, the admirable *Sevashram* at Benares deserves special mention. Temporary relief centres are opened in times of unforeseen calamities and they are closed when these calamities are over. The thoroughness and zeal with which the Ramkrishna Mission relieves the distress of people afflicted by famine, plague, flood and cyclone at different times in different parts of India are well known to all readers of newspapers. It may be said without the least fear of contradiction that before the establishment of the Ramkrishna Mission noble work like this had never been undertaken on such a scale by any man or body of men in the British and Mohammedan periods of Indian history. It is just as it should be. From whom else to expect service so arduous and loving unless it be from the children of Ramkrishna-Vivekananda? It is a very happy augury no doubt that other philanthropic organisations have been recently formed by other bodies of men inspired by the example of the Ramkrishna Mission.

The second humanitarian work of the Ramkrishna Mission is educational. The educational methods and ideals of the Mission differ widely from those obtaining in the ordinary

schools of the land. Secular knowledge is imparted in intimate relation to religious and moral culture. The students live in constant touch with their *gurus* who are all men of noble character. The lessons of the books are made living and special attention is paid to physical culture combined with practical training in agriculture, arts and industries so that the students may be self-supporting and self-reliant after the course at school is finished. There are orphanages and boarding-houses for boys without means. There are night schools and free schools for the depressed classes and working men. There is again an important Student's Home at Calcutta. The largest educational institution of the Mission has been established at Madras at a cost of several lakhs of rupees. The Vidya-pith at Deoghar also deserves special mention. The number of schools for boys and young men maintained by the Ramkrishna Mission is twelve in number.

Of Girls' Schools there are only three—the main institution at Calcutta established by the late lamented Sister Nivedita, with two branches, one at Bally and the other at Comilla. These schools are specially suited to the requirements of Hindu girls who are trained in the Hindu ideals of womanhood and who are taught Sanskrit and English with their vernacular. Many more such girls' schools have yet to be founded to remove the serious want of the Hindu community. Swami Vivekananda was keenly alive to this necessity, for he felt within his heart of hearts that true national progress would never be possible without the education of Hindu women on the right lines and so it is for this purpose that he specially employed Sister Nivedita. The real obstacle to the higher education of women in our country is the early marriage of our girls. Their higher education will be possible only in proportion to the degree to which their marriageable age will be raised. It is a happy sign no doubt that their marriageable age is steadily rising. That all women are destined for marriage is an idea also that is gradually disappearing and it is most gratifying to note that a few highly-educated nuns have dedicated themselves entirely to the cause of the women of

India. While on the subject of the education of girls, I should be failing in my duty were I not to specially mention Sree Sarada Mandir, a noble institution attached to the Nivedita Girls' School, where women-teachers are being trained.

The vision of a Hindu University like the famous ancient universities of Nalanda, Taxilla, Odantapuri and Vikramasila constantly floated before the eyes of Swami Vivekananda. It was his earnest desire to lay the foundation of such a university or failing that, a college after his own ideal. I had occasion to go to Kashmir and stay there for some time a few years ago. While there I was credibly informed that Swamiji had made a serious attempt to establish such a college at Srinagar. His Highness the Maharaja was quite willing to grant him land for the purpose but unfortunately through certain adverse circumstances I need not detail here the scheme fell through. Be that as it may, it is the duty of the country to see that such a college is soon established at a suitable place. It is very expensive no doubt but nothing is denied to a dogged pertinacity. Such a college would be the best vehicle for the propagation of the ideas of Vivekananda. It is a pity the Swami passed away in the very prime of life. Had he lived a few years more he could have done so many things that they are beyond the utmost stretch of our imagination. But no useful purpose is served by regretting and imagining. It is the bounden duty of all his children to see that his unfinished work is pushed forward as far as possible.

The Ramkrishna Mission was founded by Swami Vivekananda in the year 1897. The success that has attended its endeavours within the last thirty years fills one with hope and joy. That what has been done is very creditable goes without saying. Still a great deal more has to be done. The whole country must be dotted over with the institutions of the Ramkrishna Mission. Besides, it is a fact that there are repeated calls from Europe and America for more preachers, but the Mission is unable to meet the demand for paucity of workers. So what is wanted now is more men and more money—but men above all. The whole world must be

deluged with the spirituality of India. The trumpet of Vedanta must be sounded in all quarters of the globe. The aim of Swami Vivekananda was nothing short of this. Hinduism means nothing but Vedanta and the living commentaries on Vedanta were Ramkrishna and Vivekananda. About the previous *avatars* some doubt is inevitable. The question is naturally raised as to how far they are historical and how far legendary but no such question can possibly arise over Ramkrishna and Vivekananda, for their disciples are still in our midst. *As Buddhism means the imitation of Buddha and Christianity means the imitation of Christ, so Hinduism is another name for the imitation of our rishis and avatars ;—and because there cannot be any doubt whatever as to the historicity of Ramkrishna and Vivekananda, therefore it follows that the Hinduism of those drawing their inspiration from these great souls must be more living, vital and dynamic than the Hinduism of others.* Like the past prophets and *avatars* of India they delivered the message of Vedanta once more at a very critical stage of our national life when Hinduism was fast declining. Whatever may be the sect of a Hindu—be he a dualist, qualified non-dualist or a non-dualist pure and simple—be he a Vaishnava, Shakta or Shaiva—it is on one of the commentaries of Vedanta that his sect is founded. In the teachings of Ramkrishna and Vivekananda we see that which we do not see anywhere else—I mean, the wonderful harmony of all the conflicting schools and sects ; and yet it is not merely the religion of learning, the religion of theories but the religion of life, practice (*Sadhana*) and realisation (*Siddhi*). A man's *Ishtam* (object of worship) will not only remain unimpaired but he will be all the more devoted to his *Ishtam* for his reverence for Ramkrishna and Vivekananda and for contemplating his *Ishtam* in the light of their lives. It is not only the Hindus who will be better Hindus but Christians and Mussalmans also will be better Christians and better Moslems if they cherish reverence for Ramkrishna and Vivekananda. The lives and teachings of Ramkrishna and Vivekananda are the sure solvents of the intolerance associated with the Semitic group of religions,

viz., Judaism, Christianity and Islam. All the religions of the world are bound to come under some school or other of Vedanta.

As for the Hindu, he is very tolerant no doubt in matters of doctrines, dogmas and modes of worship, but as he is very narrow in social matters, his social idea cannot but be liberalised if he once comes under the influence of Ramkrishna and Vivekananda. This is the true character of Hinduism and this alone can justly claim to be the Religion Universal. *Universal Religion has nothing to do with eclecticism and syncretism. It is the underlying principle of all the religions of the world. Hinduism, rightly understood, is not a religion among religions but religion itself—the absolute religion. The full manifestation of Hinduism in the present age we see in Ramkrishna and Vivekananda alone. To follow them is the same thing as to follow Universal Religion.* Man pants for Man and it is through the God-Man that he ultimately arrives at the Truth. *This is the psychology of avatar-worship, prophet-worship and hero-worship.* It is not external worship merely that will suffice. External worship has its place but *what is needed above all is inward method and worship in spirit; or in other words, the most important thing is the formation of one's character after the example of the Hero, for the Hero is the ideal incarnate.* The genius of Hinduism or Universal Religion in the present age was manifested in the person of Ramkrishna Paramhansa. The champion of Hinduism in the present age was Swami Vivekananda, the ochre-clad generalissimo of his God-intoxicated Master. They have infused a new spirit into the dead bones of our religion and have made the much abused Hindu bold, strong and self-confident. What he wants now is that boldness and enthusiasm which was the marked feature of the early Buddhist, the early Christian and the early Moslem. It is not by the sword but by the power of the spirit that the Hindu seeks to conquer the world. It is the business of the Ramkrishna Mission to arouse the dormant spirit of the Hindu. It is the business of the Mission to remove the poverty of our soul. It is the business of the Mission to convince the Hindu that he is a veritable lion and

not a bleating lamb. That he takes himself for a lamb is due to the obstruction caused by Maya. The veil of this Maya must be rent asunder with a ruthless hand. It is the business of the Mission to remove all the evils the Hindu is heir to. Economic evils, social evils, civic evils—in short, there is nothing that does not come within the scope of the Ramkrishna Mission ; yet the method of the so-called social reformer and political agitator it wholly rejects. It is the aim of the Mission to train the Hindu in his national culture and make him a Hindu in the true sense of the term so that he may be strong, self-determining and have confidence in himself.

The fundamental principle of the Mission, however, is not political and social reform, though it knows very well that all the departments of life are inter-related and inter-dependent. The Mission goes to the root of the matter. If the nation wants to rise once more it must rise through the principle of Dharma. This was the conclusion reached by Swami Vivekananda, the founder of the Mission, with the deep insight of a *rishi*. It is not for nothing that he saw the vision of Awakened India in his hours of meditation. The believers in Ramkrishna-Vivekananda must have faith in this vision and the Mission is strong in this faith.

What short-sighted social reformers and political agitators are doing in our country the man who runs may read. Now we hear so much about constructive work, village organisation and all that sort of thing. If success attend these endeavours none will be more gratified than we ; but because the underlying principle of all these activities is political, therefore it is very doubtful how they will all end. The aim of the Mission is different altogether. The foundation of true constructive work was laid by Swami Vivekananda about thirty years ago. The Mission is loyally treading in his steps, it is silently carrying the colours of its Master and is slowly but surely extending its operations. May God help the Mission to forge further ahead ! The slogan of the Mission is *Individual Reform* or what the Swamiji called his man-making work. Let individual

character be first formed on the basis of Dharma and social, political and economic reforms must come themselves. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you."

The object of the Ramkrishna Mission is best represented by the symbol conceived by the genius of its founder as its characteristic mark and seal. It is the symbol of harmony—the harmony of Jnana, Bhakti, Karma and Yoga. What the Swamiji has called Practical Vedanta is boldly inscribed on the banner of the Mission. The Vedanta of the forest and the mountain-cave is to be brought to bear on our daily life. That is why a new order of monks has come into existence. For parallels we have to go back to the Buddhistic age of India and the history of Mediaeval Europe. The immense benefit conferred on man by Buddha's *bhikshus* and the Catholic monks is known to every student of the world's civilisation. That philanthropy which is not based on renunciation inspired by spirituality but on the profit-and-loss philosophy of the utilitarian school is philanthropy without sense. It is purely mechanical, and as a machine is lifeless, no real good can be expected from it. Even the word "pity" has not been used by the founder of the Mission. His motto is Renunciation and Service—the service of *Narayana* in man. It is an ideal not to be found in Buddhist India for the Buddhist ethics does not rise higher than the ethics of pity. Nor is it to be found in Mediaeval Europe for the Christianity of the Church never rose above dualism proper. The home of this ideal is India no doubt. The source of this ideal is India's Upanishads. But the ideal was never applied to life as it should have been. It is the large-hearted Swami who has done this for the first time in the history of Hindustan or for that matter, in the history of the world. No dedication, no true service is possible without absolute renunciation. That is why the helmsmen of the Mission are all Sannyasins. Their high philosophy of work may be beyond the comprehension of the majority of men. Still the noble example set by them is well calculated to inspire all to go forth and do likewise. It is through

*nishkama karma* (work without the desire for external result) that purity of the heart will be attained and it is through the pure heart that Jnana (wisdom), Bhakti (devotion) and Prema (love) will shine forth in their glory and lead men ultimately to the goal of Mukti (liberation). However we may talk, we can but do good to ourselves by trying to do good to others. The real effect of all true work is nothing but internal. This thought will save us from vanity and make us heartily grateful to the poor, the ignorant, the heavy-laden and the weary, for God has given us an opportunity to serve Him by serving the needy since He is everywhere and He is all. We should always remember that it is *Narayana* who comes to us disguised as the forlorn and the helpless. How beautifully and feelingly has Swami Vivekananda expressed this idea in the well-known lines of his famous Bengali song! The English rendering is this :

From highest Brahman to the yonder worm,  
 And to the very minutest atom,  
 Everywhere is the same God, the All-Love ;  
 Friend, offer mind, soul, body at their feet.  
 These are His manifold forms before thee,  
 Rejecting them, where seekest thou for God?  
 Who loves all beings, without distinction,  
 He indeed is worshipping best his God.

The restless activity of the Western world that disturbs the repose of the soul must not be mistaken for the *Karma-Yoga* of India. The true *Karma-Yogin*, in the words of Emerson, "must keep his head in solitude and hand in society." Such is the character of the activity of the Ramkrishna Mission. The monks of this Mission live in silence and solitude at regular intervals—for the life of the spirit requires it—and it is the spirit of silence that they bring to bear upon their work. A man cannot always work nor can he always meditate, worship and study. Bhagavan Ramkrishna has given us a clear warning against monotony in life. That is why the motto of the Mission is the harmony of the four classical paths of Jnana, Bhakti, Karma and Yoga.

The aim of the Mission is high ; its skill in work is matchless. Still a great deal more has to be done. A perfect network has got to be spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. The name of Ramkrishna-Vivekananda must resound everywhere in the land. A complete reawakening of Hinduism must be brought about at any cost. The ideals of the Mission must be clearly distinguished from those of the Hindu Mahasabha which seems to be chiefly political in its outlook. What useful purpose will be served by the Mahasabha to the cause of the Hindus' religion is a matter not very clear to me. That the Hindus as a community should organise themselves for the purpose of defence goes without saying. But unless the true principles of Hinduism are inculcated upon the Hindus and made a living force no Mahasabha and no Sangathan will be able to lift them out of the slough. Until India is firmly set on her feet and made to rear her head the Ramkrishna Mission cannot think of rest.

What is wanted now is more men and more money—but men above all. Men coming forward, money will not be wanting. That is why Swami Vivekananda has said : "Money is nothing. For the last twelve years of my life I did not know where the next meal would come from ; but money and everything else I want must come, because they are my slaves and not I theirs ; money and everything else must come. Must—that is the word. Where are the men? That is the question." How forcible the words! What is wanted now is an abundant supply of strong and intelligent youths who will take up the work of the Mission with perfect alacrity, in whose ears will constantly sound the voice of the prophet of the age and who will be the devoted practisers of the great *mantram* (message), आत्मनो मीमांसा उग्रजिताय च। (for one's own liberation and also for the good of the world). The great Swami wanted only one thousand such youths about thirty years ago. That number has not yet joined his rank because in his work there is no momentary excitement but sober and deliberate consecration of life. That verily the call of the Swami is the call of the Motherland, that the Swami's

call is verily the call of India's God is a truth to be fully realised by the young men of India. The area of work is daily extending. It will soon have to be extended further afield. It is not only in India but in countries outside—in fact, in all the continents that the message of Ramkrishna-Vivekananda is to be boldly preached. One thousand workers are no longer sufficient for all the purposes of the Mission. Five thousand workers seem to be necessary at present. Is it too much for the Mission to expect five thousand strong and intelligent youths of character out of the three hundred millions of people inhabiting India? There is no fear whatever that population will decrease. Number is not everything. The most important factor is quality. What good can the country expect from men no better than crawling worms breeding fast and doing nothing?

It is five thousand competent workers that seem to be the present need of the Mission. But how is it that they are not forthcoming in spite of the clarion-call of Vivekananda still ringing through the air? Obstacles then there undoubtedly are. It is the duty of all, householders and Sannyasins alike, to remove these obstacles to the best of their power. It is the special duty of those who are teachers and journalists by profession, for the influence they exercise on the thoughts of youths is very potent indeed. The obstacles I refer to appear to me to be six in number. The *first obstacle* is the absence from the mind of our youths of any clear conception of the ethical ideal or the meaning of human life. Their environment is calculated to blunt their moral sense. That anything has to be done beyond passing the examinations, marrying and earning one's livelihood as a Government servant, pleader or doctor is a matter of which very few are conscious at all. The supreme need of *Brahmacharya* without which there is no difference between man and beast is felt by very few of our youths. The *second obstacle* is the want of seriousness, the spirit of irreverence or levity (*a-sraddha*), the tendency to make light of everything however grave—a habit for which Carlyle's term is 'persiflage,' a habit

which he rightly considers to be the bane of society. The *third obstacle* is the unrestricted publication of pornographic literature in the blessed name of Art. The *fourth obstacle* is brutal lethargy, idle talk and foolish and demoralising games and amusements. The *fifth obstacle* is the pernicious teaching of modern Europe that asceticism is anti-social, that it is an imperfect, perverse and erroneous ideal of life. Here the fault lies not less with our older men posing as teachers. When we hear from a lofty platform the deliberate opinion that the synthesis of *vidya* (spiritual wisdom) and *avidya* (nescience) constitutes the philosophy of our people and when even the Upanishads are quoted in support of this philosophy then I have no alternative but to quote these very Upanishads and say in reply: "Existing deep in the layers of Nescience, yet flattering themselves as so many sages, those wiseacres move constantly round the circle of birth and death like the blind led by the blind." Besides the five obstacles just touched on there is another one—not least because mentioned last. It is *Æsthetic Sentimentality masquerading as mysticism and spirituality* whose claims are iterated and re-iterated by a section of the press and the "cultured crowd" with a persistence worthy of a better cause. Its subtle poison is undermining the character of our youths and its "respectability" has assumed such abnormal proportions that to utter a protest against it is the height of temerity.

The obstacles mentioned above are the unmistakable signs of a grave social distemper. It is the bounden duty of all, householders and Sannyasins alike, to declare war *a outrance* against the moral canker that is eating into the vitals of the nation. It is the duty *par excellence* of those who are teachers and journalists by profession. The Mission will never get workers as long as this duty is not properly discharged. *The taste of the nation must be radically changed.* Pornographic literature and effeminate literature must be banished altogether and the literature of strength and healthy literature must be triumphantly restored. It must be brought home to the Hindu that if he wants to have a "place in the

sun" HE MUST BE RE-HINDUISED, that is, his religion must be a thing of life and not of use and wont, he must give up his faint-heartedness and be a hero in the strife. He must combine in himself the spiritual fire of the Brahmin with the force and chivalry of the Kshatriya. In order that he may be all this he cannot do better than go deep into the wonderful life, *sadhana* (practice) and realisation of Ramkrishna, the fulfilment of Hinduism, and in order that he may understand Ramkrishna he cannot do better than read the speeches and writings of Swami Vivekananda, the accredited agent of Ramkrishna, "read those speeches and writings by day, meditate on them by night, peruse them again and again, study them, imprint them on his mind and impress them on his heart." Ramkrishna can be understood through Vivekananda alone. Any attempt to understand Ramkrishna, without reference to Vivekananda, his *alter ego*, is bound to fail as we know from our experience. The understanding of Ramkrishna is only another name for the re-awakening of Hinduism, the palingenesis of Hindustan. For the meaning of this re-awakening and for the place of Ramkrishna in this movement of regeneration let me conclude by quoting the solemn words of Vivekananda himself as they stand translated into English:

"Strong in the strength of this new spiritual renaissance, men after re-organising these scattered and disconnected spiritual ideas will be able to comprehend and practise them in their own lives and also to recover from oblivion those that are lost. And as the sure pledge of this glorious future, the all-merciful Lord has manifested, . . . . in the present age, an incarnation which in point of completeness in revelation, its synthetic harmonising of all ideals and its promoting every sphere of spiritual culture, surpasses the manifestations of all past ages.

"So at the very dawn of this momentous epoch, the reconciliation of all aspects and ideals of religious thought and worship is being proclaimed; this boundless, all-embracing Idea lying . . . so long concealed in the Religion Eternal

and its scriptures and now re-discovered . . . is being declared to humanity in a trumpet voice.

"This new dispensation of the age (*yuga-dharma*) is the source of great good to the whole world, specially to India ; and the inspirer of this dispensation, Sri Bhagavan Ramkrishna, is the reformed and remodelled manifestation of all the past great epoch-makers in religion. O man, have faith in this, and lay it to heart.

"The dead never return ; the past night does not reappear ; a spent-up tidal wave does not rise anew ; neither does man inhabit the same body over again. So from the worship of the dead past, O man, we invite you to the worship of the living present ; from the regretful brooding over bygones, we invite you to the activities of the present ; from the waste of energy in retracing lost and demolished pathways, we call you back to broad new-laid highways lying very near. He that is wise, let him understand.

"Of that power which at the very first impulse has roused distant echoes from all the four quarters of the globe, conceive in your mind the manifestation in its fulness ; and discarding all idle misgivings, weaknesses and the jealousies characteristic of enslaved peoples, come and help in the turning of this mighty wheel of new dispensation (*yuga-chakra*) !"

## MONASTICISM OF THE NEW ERA.\*

BY SJ. SATYENDRA NATH MAJUMDAR

(Editor, "Ananda Bazar Patrika")

The first Convention of the Order of Sree Ramakrishna has already begun its sittings and this solemn occasion inspires me with a deep sense of reverence, for, to me it seems that the future history of the Order is going to be determined here and now. "Many a time in her history Mother India has

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\* Rendered freely into English.

been dragged to the verge of destruction and invariably at those critical periods of her national life the God of India has held her up by revealing Himself to her and by directing her to new channels of thought and life." This is the great secret of India's history which the great Swami Vivekananda had discovered and proclaimed to us and in the life and realisation of his Divine Master he found the inspiration for India's re-awakening. He found in him a prophet most perfect, a unique messenger of harmony and love and a character endowed with all those qualities which we need to cultivate and possess for the regeneration of our individual and collective life. He considered that the advent of Sree Ramakrishna in this materialistic age with such unique and unforeseen spiritual vision and power, had a meaning for us to-day. He carried for us and for the world a new message, a new hope. The Swami found in Him a Divine Messenger, who was the most perfect, the most powerful, the most complete, in a word the fulfilment of all the past prophets and seers, who held the power to change the outlook of human civilisation to a higher end at the present age. And inspired with this prophetic vision of an Apostle, the patriot-saint of modern India heralded to us in a trumpet voice the message—"Oh man, from the worship of the dead, I call thee to the worship of the living. By discarding vain misgivings, weaknesses, hatred and jealousy, help ye all the oncoming of a New Age." 'Worship of the living—and not of the dead'—this pithy yet pregnant expression bears out fully the noble object with which the Order of Sree Ramakrishna came into being. The monastic disciples of the Master who were left behind to proclaim this divine message could easily have started a new theocratic sect after Sree Ramakrishna, introducing new rituals and modes of worship, but they purposely and deliberately avoided this considering the evils that have already been done by warring, disintegrated and antagonistic sects in the religious history of India and of the world. They saw all this and proceeded therefore to spread only the message, the ideal and the practical demonstration

of a true life of spirituality through character, by emphasising the fundamental principles and essentials of religious life ; and this I consider to be the root of all the signs of re-awakening that we witness to-day all over the country in the different branches and groups of our individual and national life. The message of Ramakrishna—Vivekananda has inspired a consciousness and a sense of duty and responsibility in the hearts of the children of India towards their national heritage. Sectarian outlook has had no place in the scheme of this holy order which owed its inception to the demand for the preservation of a universal ideal of religious life. Practical idealism is the very bed-rock of this institution associated with the hallowed name of Sree Ramakrishna. Universality is the very life of it, and everyone whatever caste, creed or denomination he may belong to has the opportunity to associate himself with it on claims of pure Humanity.

But inspite of not having any set creed of external ceremonials, the movement has behind it a firm principle,—that of renunciation or foregoing the lesser for the greater, the baser for the nobler. This forms the background and is the ideal of this new order of monasticism, synthetic and progressive in character. Like that of bygone ages this neo-monasticism is not an institution based on the total negation —nay, denunciation of the world and worldly life, is not self-centred or given to the narrow ideal of individual salvation, but it offers man a vast field of *sadhana*, for his own uplift, for spiritual discipline and culture in which the Supreme Brahman is realised through service to others. This new order of monasticism does not set up any hostile camp against the rights and claims of a householder's life but rather offers to the latter a place by its own side. Each has its own sphere and each its own standard of life and discipline ; monk and householder stand hand in hand in the polity of this neo-vedantic organisation. Monasticism here is freed from the shackles of dead forms and is guided by a spirit of brotherly sympathy and co-operation ; and that, to my mind, gentlemen, is the reason why we have gathered here to-day on the same

platform, all united to offer our homage to Sree Ramakrishna, the embodiment of divinity in man.

Sree Ramakrishna and Vivekananda came for the whole world, no doubt, yet we, the children of Mother India, have first to realise the fact and purport of their lives as meant primarily for the country in which they were born and in which there is so much of disintegration and degradation. Have we yet seriously thought about and understood the real significance of the advent of these ideal personalities in the midst of this weak, helpless and disunited Hindu race of to-day? Have we yet seriously thought of directing our attention to the light which these twin personalities shed forth and of treading along the path held out by them? And folly of follies—have we not been still shutting ourselves from that luminous light and crying for light and guidance at the same time? Swami Vivekananda traced the cause of our present downfall to our dogged conservatism ; and to make Hinduism a living force once again he wanted to make her aggressive. To achieve the object of his cherished desire he started this organisation called the Ramakrishna Mission, which should serve as the fore-runner and the vehicle of this neo-vedantic movement. And the time has now come when we should take note of what and how much we have done to strengthen, purify and accelerate the movement by our noble impulses and actions individually and collectively.

Leaving aside the idea of the formal inauguration of the institution, Sree Ramakrishna by his benign touch brought into existence an ideal Brotherhood out of the small group of young and ardent followers which was to serve as the core of the future organisation, and instilled into it the fire, the zeal and the wisdom to hold, carry on and fulfil the ideal and the revelation which he embodied. The organisation with its various ramifications has stayed to grow gradually. The time has therefore come now, to make a thorough analysis of the whole situation, to compare notes and to see how far the custodians of Sree Ramakrishna's ideas and ideals have enlightened the country with their lofty principles of knowledge

and activity, renunciation and service. The late Swami Prajnananda of sacred memory wrote in his book entitled "भारत भाष्यम्" — "Both monks and householders received equally the Master's grace. None could claim special favour from him. But he whom the Master wills to be a monk has a serious responsibility, which is for the country, for humanity and for the preservation, practice and propagation of the Ideal represented and established by Him. As long as the Brotherhood will remain capable of maintaining and living up to that Ideal there shall never be any lack of true monasticism and as long as the methods of life and *sadhana* for the fulfilment of that trust, as distinctly indicated by Him will work out in the Order, there shall be no occasion for incapacity as well."

The ideal of this new type of monasticism for the modern age had been revealed in the life of the Swami Vivekananda. And the Swami with a view to keeping up the ideal established this monastery. "This monastery" he says in one place, "is never to be converted into a Thakurbari", i.e. a place where superficials of religion take the place of the spirit of the thing, while on the other hand it is "gradually to be developed into a full-fledged university to serve as a centre of an all-round man-making education. From here shall emerge Sannyasins consecrated to the service of the motherland, Sannyasins who shall carry from door to door the strength-giving, soul-enthralling ideas of the Upanishads, the gospel of freedom and service, of toleration and sympathy, of harmony and love, and disseminate the message of social and national regeneration." These are exactly the objects with which the Swami started this Math and these are the tasks which he has bequeathed to his followers. How far these ideas have been carried out and how far they have not been fulfilled for lack of capable workers and proper financial support from the country, is not for me to consider and judge to-day. Those who have dedicated their lives to the cause and ideal of the Brotherhood are to discuss and look into this point. What I like to emphasise is the fact that we cannot possibly estimate the full

worth and significance of this organisation from the present state of its development. The lives of a few monks or their achievements during a short period are datas insufficient for judging the value of this progressive institution. Like a living organisation this institution has just commenced to grow and who knows how many centuries it will require to fully manifest all its potentialities? Its very life-principle is spiritual ; it is to bring about a spiritual readjustment, that this organisation has come into being.

This Convention that we witness here to-day is decidedly an eye-opener as to what the Ramakrishna Mission has done towards the fulfilment of its trust since its first inception. The leaders of the Order, therefore, by organising this Convention have provided an occasion to remind both the monastic and lay members and workers of the institution to take notice of what they have thus far done to fulfil the duties and responsibilities that lay upon them for the accomplishment and furtherance of its avowed objects. They have now come forward with an appeal to the country at large for a greater amount of sympathy, support and co-operation to facilitate a fuller expression of this national institution, for evidently it is on this that the future growth of the true Indian national spirit rests. They have again given by this convention an opportunity to the members individually and collectively, to discuss and deliberate upon the merits and demerits of the workings of the Order and judge for themselves what items of Swamiji's programme of work have not been attempted and how they can be taken up in the face of difficulties due to lack of men and money. And the time has come, gentlemen, when we should ask ourselves if and how far we are willing to carry out the divine trust which the founder of this Order, our Master, our Prophet, Philosopher and Guide has bequeathed to us.

You know, friends, what the great leader Swami Vivekananda has told us—"India will be the centre this time." He believed it fully and that was why Vivekananda, the embodiment of strength and manliness, did spread out his mighty arms to uplift the nation from its present degradation.

We are afraid we have not yet proved by our thoughts and actions that we have fully realised the significance of the Swamiji's advice. What have we done till now for the progress of the nation, for the spread of the truths of the Vedanta and the knowledge of the Higher Self, to remedy the paralysed condition of social life burdened with pseudo-religious customs and superstitions? He expected us to proceed, not with the self-conceit of the so-called reformer but as humble servants to begin the work of bringing the light of the Upanishads to every door. For putting these noble ideas into practice the Swami wanted a band of young consecrated souls to whom the Swamiji's message was—"Set fire at the root and let it burn upwards so that from the ashes may come out a United India rejuvenated."

Because of his occasional attacks against the so-called social reformers some of us are apt to think that he wanted us to be satisfied with the existing social customs and superstitions. These people miss the real significance of the Swami's message. They have not understood the Vivekananda who denounced that type of slavish mentality in us which is always ready to compromise between social laws and truth. And so they follow the soulless traditional customs without demur. But let me remind them that the removal of untouchability, the declaration of equal rights for every one in matters spiritual, the introduction of marriages between the various sub-divisions of the same caste and similar other reforms in society as indicated by the Swamiji, do certainly not fall within the scope of the monastic order, but should be the primary duty of every lay follower to take up. It is a matter for extreme regret that these lay followers of the Swami have not yet tried to act up to the directions given by their Master in proportion to the degree of their devotion to his personality. Many, out of excessive humility, think that the call of the Swamiji to work for the regeneration of the country, to uplift the down-trodden, is meant only for the Sannyasins and not for the house-holders. This is a misconception which requires immediate removal for the good of us and the society. The

house-holder should remember that the Swami wanted to reconstruct this society on a broad basis freeing it from the narrow limits of the old fossilised social customs and usages including within its broad fold all castes and classes from the 'Chandala' to the highest Brahmana. Aye, he went even further. He was for bringing within our own fold those who go by the name of Mlechcha and build up a society which should reject none, so that ultimately this may help the formation of a united nation to uphold and preserve the ideal of Sanatana Dharma (Religion Eternal).

Sings of a re-awakening after centuries of deep sleep are visible on all sides. But where are those that would serve India at this period consciously with their eyes wide open? "Whosoever shall believe in Her awakening shall receive strength and courage through the grace of the Lord." This message of hope uttered by the Swamiji embraces all alike—high or low, monk or house-holder, irrespective of any distinction. Friends, let us then prepare ourselves for this sacred duty which he has enjoined upon us. This is a task which is not to be done in a moment or by any magical skill. We shall have to acquire through self-sacrifice and sincere devotion the power to hold fast to that difficult ideal. This alone can enable us to carry on the work against all odds, along the lines chalked out by our Master and Guide. This Convention has been a solemn call to every one of us to collect all our scattered energies together to bring about an all-round unity. And blessed shall we be if the call has reached the inmost core of our being. Indeed blessed have we been, for this holy conference has given us an opportunity to know our short-comings, so that by removing them we may reach the destined goal. Let us therefore, with our heart and soul purified, take refuge at the feet of Sree Ramakrishna and be in readiness to hear the rejuvenated India of the future calling out to each one of us with the words—

Glory unto the Guru !

## THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION AND THE IDEAL OF SERVICE.

SWAMI YATISHWARANANDA.

"The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in these channels and the rest will take care of itself."

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

Speaking on the Ramakrishna Maths and Mission, Lord Ronaldshay says in his *Heart of Aryavarta*: "Associated with the Monastic Order (of Sri Ramakrishna) which consists of Sannyasins and Brahmacharins is a Mission, these twin organisations standing for renunciation and service respectively, declared by the late Swami Vivekananda to be the two national ideals of India. The Mission undertakes service of all kinds, social, charitable and educational. The monasteries are dedicated to the perpetuation through their spiritual culture of the great Ideal and Revelation which Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa embodied in his life." A word of explanation is necessary here. The twin ideals of renunciation and service are inseparable like the twin institutions of Math and Mission. In the monasteries of the Order of Sri Ramakrishna, greater stress is laid on renunciation and spiritual culture as ordinarily understood, and in the various branches of the Ramakrishna Mission greater emphasis is placed on what is popularly known as service. True service, as we shall presently see, is a form of spiritual culture.

The object of Swami Vivekananda's founding the twin institutions of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission was to carry on the Mission of his great Master, and this by bringing into existence a band of workers who would strive their utmost "for both the emancipation of the Self and the well-being of the world."—आत्मनो भीकार्यं जगद्विताय च। And with this end in view, the Swami tried to express the ancient monastic ideals not only through the old methods of quiet spiritual practice and silent preaching, but also through what the modern world calls service—but service spiritualised. All

persons, irrespective of caste or creed, race or nationality, are to be looked upon as veritable manifestations of the Divine, and served according to their needs—physical, intellectual or spiritual.

Renunciation in its highest form means self-effacement or the killing of the ego with all our base desires and passions. It implies the sacrifice of the lower self with a view to manifest the higher. As Swami Vivekananda puts it : "We must die, that is certain ; let us die then for a good cause. Let all our actions tend towards the sacrifice of self." The body that is nourished by food should be held as a sacrifice to the welfare of humanity. The mind that is developed through study must be laid down for the service of all groping in mental darkness. The soul that is evolved through mental discipline and religious practice should be utilised for the spiritual ministration of the world-weary souls hankering for the higher life. It is thus that our physical death can be turned into our spiritual rebirth. And this is the ideal of renunciation realising itself in service that Swami Vivekananda placed before the members of the Ramakrishna Mission and the world at large.

The Ramakrishna Mission is pre-eminently a religious body, its service forming a part of its Sadhana or spiritual practice. It stands for the universal ideals of religion. Its numerous preaching centres in India and America are trying to spread through the life and thought of their members a true knowledge of Religion in its all-embracing aspect and also to promote fellowship among the followers of the different religions of the world, which are in fact, as Sri Ramakrishna realised, so many forms of the One Eternal and Universal Religion. Its educational institutions aim to impart to the students, and that in a spirit of service, the best cultures of the East and the West, and to instil into their mind moral and spiritual ideals which are essential for the building up of true character. Its permanent charitable centres in which the monastic members themselves mostly perform the duties of the doctor and the nurse and also render other forms of service, are attempting to

alleviate the miseries and sufferings of the poor and the destitute in various towns and villages. Its temporary relief centres, often conducted with great personal risk, render service to the afflicted during the prevalence of plague, influenza, flood, famine and other widespread calamities.

What was the mainspring of Swami Vivekananda's inspiration?

The source of Swamiji's inspiration was the life and teachings of his great Master. The service to the Daridra Narayanas was practically inaugurated by Sri Ramakrishna himself during the sixties of the last century. While going on a pilgrimage to Northern India with Babu Mathuranath Biswas—son-in-law of Rani Rasmani who founded the Temple of Dakshineswar—Sri Ramakrishna was distressed to see the miserable condition of the people of a village near Deoghar. And moved with great sympathy and compassion he said to Mathur Babu, "You are the steward of the Divine Mother. Feed these poor people one day nicely and give each one of them a piece of cloth." But Mathur Babu hesitated. The pilgrimage he had undertaken was a very expensive one. And the people whom Sri Ramakrishna wanted to be fed and clothed were very large in number. Funds might fall short during the journey. But Sri Ramakrishna was inexorable. He was weeping to see the abject poverty and misery of the men, women and children before him and exclaimed—"I am not going to Benares. I prefer to remain with these helpless and destitute people." Saying this, he took his seat among the poor—the objects of his compassion. Mathur Babu had no other alternative. He ordered bales of cloth from Calcutta. He fed the people sumptuously and distributed the cloths among them. Sri Ramakrishna's joy knew no bounds and he readily consented to proceed on his pilgrimage.

What is the motive of this service? To quote Sri Ramakrishna's own words, "If one gives away anything in charity with the spirit of non-attachment, he does it for his own good, and not for simply doing good to others. He thereby serves God who resides in all beings, and service unto God means

helping one's own self. If a person serves God manifest in all beings—not only in man, but also in other creatures—with-out craving for name and fame, or for going to heaven after death, and expects no return from those whom he serves—such work is really work without motive, and it benefits him alone." This is the spirit of service as laid down by Sri Ramakrishna. Work, thus performed in the right spirit of Karma Yoga, becomes worship, and is one of the most efficient means of self-purification and God-realisation.

This ideal was impressed by the Master on the mind of Swami Vivekananda during the latter's days of discipleship. Srimat Swami Saradanandaji narrates an incident in his life of the Master,—*Sri Ramakrishna Lila-Prasanga* :—One day when Sri Ramakrishna was seated in his room at Dakshineswar, surrounded by Narendranath and other disciples, the topics under discussion drifted to the ideal of showing mercy to all creatures. "Show mercy to all creatures!"—the Master repeated these words and passed into a deep trance. On coming back to the state of semi-consciousness, he took upon the thread of the discussion and explained the true import of the ideal of charity :—"Kindness to all creatures! Fie upon thee, man! An insignificant being thyself, how canst thou show mercy to God's creatures? Who art thou to show mercy? No, no, it can't be mercy. Rather serve all *Jivas*—all beings—as Shiva—God Himself." Narendranath of all others understood the deep significance of the words of the Master and found in them a wonderful illumination. In these words he got the clue to his Practical Vedanta—by which the highest ideals of the Vedanta—the property of the recluse of the forest and the cave—could be brought to the city and the market place, and applied to the life of all—monks as well as householders. To attain to the highest knowledge—the knowledge of Unity—a person need no longer cut himself away from society and root out from his heart the noble impulses of love and service. By looking upon all as embodiments of God and serving them with reverence and love, the spiritual aspirant is sure to be able to purify his mind of the sense of superiority

and arrogance that often accompanies our ordinary acts of charity, and thereby to realise ultimately the God in all beings as also in himself. Narendranath grasped the spirit of service as interpreted by Sri Ramakrishna, and expressed the hope of proclaiming it some day, if the Lord so willed. The Lord did will as the Swami hoped. And Swami Vivekananda became the messenger of the sublime gospel of service which he carried to the doors of all—learned and ignorant, rich and poor, Brahmin and Pariah alike.

The path of service is a sure means to God-realisation. And the God whom Sri Ramakrishna and, following him, his greatest disciple Swami Vivekananda worshipped and realised in their own lives was no colourless abstraction. It is the sole, living reality which is absolute and relative, transcendent and immanent at the same time. And the universal love which swayed these twin souls was born of their vision of the One in the Many. "I see Him," declared Sri Ramakrishna, "in all and as all. Men and other creatures,—all appear as veritable figures skin-bound, but with the Lord within! The one Substance has taken the forms of the cosmos with all living creatures. I realise that all come of the One Substance." Thus God may be worshipped not only in the temple of brick and mortar, but more than that, in the temple of flesh and blood—in the tabernacle of the human body. If God is in every being, does He not exist in the sick and the diseased, in the ignorant and the illiterate, in the weary soul yearning for the waters of Life? It is this vision of the One dwelling in all that made Swami Vivekananda declare with all the passion of his soul:—"May I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum-total of all souls. And above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God, the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship." He says further: "Blessed are we that we are given the privilege of working for Him, not helping Him. Cut out this word help from your mind. You worship. Stand in this reverent attitude to the whole universe."

There exists a good deal of misunderstanding as regards the religion of service proclaimed by the Swami by his life and precept. The Swami learnt this creative aspect of religion at the feet of his Master who was a living embodiment of Vedanta in practice. But still some doubt whether or not this ideal of service is Hindu in origin. Some think it to be inspired by Christianity, forgetting the great fact that it existed in India long before Christ was even dreamt of. Others think in other ways. To give an illustration. Some orthodox people once paid a visit to a Sri Ramakrishna Home of Service. Seeing the Sannyasins as well as the Brahmacharins with the holy thread serving the patients, from the so-called high caste to the low caste, without any distinction—against what these visitors thought to be the principles of Varnashrama Dharma—they came to the conclusion that the Ramakrishna Mission was a Buddhist organisation! It is a pride to the members of the Mission to be looked upon as followers of the Lord Buddha—who laid great stress on the practical application of the grand truths of the Vedic religion, and preached with a new power and meaning the ideals of India,—renunciation and service. But the source of this inspiration can be traced to the Upanishads—the perennial fountain-heads of Hindu spiritual life. Swami Vivekananda, as we have seen, no doubt, got the direct impulse from his great *Guru*. But the Master's life again was a part of the eternal spiritual current that has been flowing in an unbroken line since the dawn of Hindu religious consciousness at a hoary antiquity into which history does not dare to peep.

The spirit of charity and compassion has been one of the dominating ideas of Hinduism. The Upanishadic sage declared—

“There are three branches of Dharma. The group of sacrifice, study and *charity* forms the first.”

"One should learn the triad—control of the senses, *charity* and compassion."

Further—

अद्या देयम् । अशद्याऽदेयम् । श्रिया देयम् । हृया देयम् ।  
भिया देयम् । संवदा देयम् ।

"Gifts should be given (to noble Brahmanas) with reverence ; it should not be given without reverence ; it should be given in plenty, with modesty, with fear and with compassion."

Again—

मातृदेवो भव । पितृदेवो भव । आचार्यदेवो भव । अतिथिदेवो  
भव ।

"Let thy mother be to thee a god ; let thy father be to thee a god ; let thy teacher be to thee a god ; let thy guest be to thee a god."

Charity and compassion are extolled everywhere although some limitations are put on them at times.

Sri Krishna also declares in the Bhagavad Gita—

यज्ञो दानं तप्त्वैव पावनानि मनोषिणाम् ।

"Sacrifice, gift and austerity are purifying even to the wise."

Charity sometimes has its restricted sphere. But the Lord also speaks of the saints whose love carries away everyone in its sweep.

लभंते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षौणकल्पाः ।

हिन्दैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥

"With imperfection exhausted, doubts dispelled, senses controlled, engaged in the good of all beings, the Rishis obtain absolute freedom."

Sri Krishna further enumerates the following attributes of one born with the divine attributes—

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्रागः शांतिरपैशुनम् ।

दया भूतेष्वलोक्यालं मार्दवं हृरक्षापलम् ॥

"Non-injury, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, tranquility, absence of calumny, compassion to beings, non-covetousness, gentleness, modesty, and absence of fickleness." Non-injury and compassion to beings are two of the most noble characteristics of the holy life.

Love for all beings is the most dominating note in the lives of Hindu sages and saints. The sage Dadhichi, who laid down his life for the well-being of the gods, says in the Bhavagatam—

योऽनुवेणात्मना नाथा न धर्म न यशः पुमान् ।  
ईहेत भूतदयया स शोच्यः स्वावरैरपि ॥

"Even inanimate objects feel sorry for him who does not earn Dharma and fame with the help of his perishable human body by showing compassion to all beings."

To the saint no sacrifice is too high if it brings about the well-being of others. The great devotee Prahlada prayed even for the welfare of those who tormented him. When asked by the Lord for boons he replied—

न लक्ष्यं कामये राज्यं न खगं नापुनर्भवम् ।  
कामये दुःखतपानां प्राणिनामार्तिनाशनम् ॥

"Lord, I do not want any kingdom, nor worldly happiness, nor even escape from re-birth. What I want is the cessation of the affliction of all beings tormented by the miseries of life."

The well-being of the noble souls consists in the well-being of others, for they belong to the great family of humanity which is God embodied. According to the Mahabharata—

"He alone is a knower of Religion who is the friend of all beings ; he who is intent on the welfare of all with act, thought and speech."

The Vishnupuranam again repeats the same idea, but declares at the same time that this love is born of the highest knowledge.

"Knowing the Supreme manifest in all beings, the wise extend love to all creatures without any exception."

As a matter of fact all the Puranas declare with one voice  
**परोपकारः पुण्याय पापाय परपौड़नम् ।**

"Doing good to others is religion ; doing harm to others is sin."

This compassion or rather love for all creatures is a special mark of spiritual greatness. As Sri Sankaracharya points out—

**शान्ता महान्तो निवसन्ति सन्तो वसन्तवक्षोकहितं चरन्तः ।  
 तौर्णः स्यं भौमभवार्णवं जनानहितुनान्यानपि तारयन्तः ॥**

"The great souls, calm and magnanimous, who do good to others as does the spring, and who having themselves crossed the dreadful ocean of birth and death, help others also to cross the same without any motive whatsoever."

Selfish life means spiritual death. Hence it is that the true devotee prays to the Lord not only for the stilling of his mind and senses, but also for the expansion of his self through love for all beings—

**अविनयमपनय विष्णो दमय मनः शमय विषयमृगाटशाम् ।  
 भूतदद्यां विस्तारय तारय संसारसागरतः ॥**

"Oh Vishnu, remove my egoism, calm my mind, control my attachment for the mirage of the sense-objects, increase my *love for all beings*, and save me from the ocean of existence."

The old ideal of love and compassion has been handed down to us without any break through our various religious ceremonies and festivals in which acts of charity form an important part. It is especially manifest in our Srâddha and Tarpana ceremonies in which libations are to be offered not only for the peace of the souls of one's own relatives but also for all beings. And one has to repeat—

**आब्रह्मस्तम्बपर्यन्तं देवविष्पित्तमानवाः ।  
 दृप्यन्त् पितरः सर्वे माटमातामङ्गादयः ॥**

"Let the devas, sages, manes and men, also all my relatives both on the father's and mother's sides—all beings from Brahma down to the blade of grass be appeased."

This ideal again is at the back of our charitable institutions. Our innumerable Chhatrams and Dharmashalas sprinkled all over the country still give shelter and distribute food freely, sometimes even indiscriminately, to religious men, travellers and beggars. Charity, though mostly individual and rarely organised, undoubtedly plays a great part in our collective life even to-day.

In inaugurating the Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Vivekananda placed before the country the ideal of making charity, discriminative and organised. But his speciality lay in the fact that following his Master, he went to the logical conclusion of the ideals of charity and compassion. He refused to make in service any invidious distinctions of caste or religion. Besides, he saw that from the standpoint of humanity, the poor and the ignorant stood in urgent need of charity and service more than others. His heart overflowed with love for the indigent and the down-trodden. And he passionately appealed to the young men of his country—"I bequeath to you young men, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed. Vow then to devote your whole lives to these millions going down and down every day..... You have read: मातृदेवो भवः पितृदेवो भवः 'Let the mother be as god to you ; let the father be as god to you.' I say: इतिहास्यो भवः मूर्खदेवो भवः The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant the afflicted—let these be your God. Know that service to these alone is the highest religion." The ideal of service is not only not antagonistic, but is in full accord with the highest course of conduct of every true religious Hindu. It implies a wider application of the पञ्चमायज्ञ or the five forms of sacrifices enjoined on all high caste Hindus—ब्रह्मायज्ञ or the study of the scriptures, देवयज्ञ or the offering of oblations to the gods, पितृयज्ञ or giving libations to the forefathers, रथयज्ञ or offering food to human beings, and भूतयज्ञ or offering food to even lower beings. Service—physical, intellectual

and spiritual—to all human beings, high or low, is only a practical application of दया which literally means 'sacrifice to human beings'. All these are the spiritualised forms of दण्ड or compassion manifesting themselves in दान or acts of charity—an ideal which our modern age so urgently needs. The great Manu has declared—

तपः परं दृष्टे युगे वेतायां ज्ञानसुच्यते ।

हापरे यज्ञमेवाह्नः दानमेकं कलौ युगे ॥

"Penance is the special pursuit of Satya Yuga, knowledge of the Treta Yuga, sacrifice of the Dwapara Yuga and charity of the Kali Yuga."

This dark, iron age of ours can be transformed into the golden age, if following in the footsteps of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, we can perform all our acts of charity—whether it is physical relief or imparting of secular education or spiritual ministration—in the spirit of service and worship to the Lord whom the Upanishadic sage addressed in the following inspired words—

लं स्त्रो लं पुमानसि लं कुमार उत वा कुमारौ ।

लं जौणीं दण्डेन वंचसि लं जातो भवसि विश्वतोमुखः ॥

"Thou art man, Thou art woman, Thou art youth, Thou art maiden, Thou as an old man totterest along on Thy staff. Thou art born everywhere."

May we all strive to realise this grand ideal of service to the God in man and bring blessings to ourselves and to the whole world!

IDEAS, IDEALS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE  
RAMAKRISHNA MISSION.

BY SWAMI NIHILANANDA.

The justification of the advent of a Prophet lies in that he throws a flood of light to discover the mission of a nation, made obscure by the accumulation of dust and dirt through ages of degeneration and thereby resuscitating its lost individuality, he rehabilitates the nation to its pristine glory. He fulfils this divine purpose generally by following in the footsteps of the ancient seers whose realisations are the bedrock of the existence of the national life and not in a few cases by chalking out new programmes to meet the exigencies of new requirements. His scheme of work after passing through the invariable stages of opposition and indifference, ultimately finds acceptance at the hands of the people at large.

Swami Vivekananda, the great instrument in the hand of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, founded the Order associated with the hallowed name of his Guru to enable its members to realise Truth through service of humanity at large. Undoubtedly, it is to all appearances a bold and striking departure from the generally accepted path followed for the attainment of Truth which enjoins upon all aspirants to ostracise society and lead the retired life of a recluse. It is out of place here to enter into polemics or the discussion of the scriptures to justify the course of action pursued by the Swamiji. Suffice it will to say, that the Buddhistic organisation of the mediaeval time, one of the greatest civilising factors of the Indian national life and which has left an indelible impression upon the culture of the world, welded together into a single purpose the apparently jarring ideals of renunciation and service, work and worship. The Vedas are replete with such instances of reconciliation. As a matter of fact, some of the sublimest truths of the Upanishads are said to have been discovered by Kshatriya rulers who realised them while discharging a most onerous duty placed on their shoulders. The message of the Gita—the essence of

the Upanishads and one of the three Prasthanas—was delivered at Kurukshetra in the midst of tremendous activities when the grim realities of our national life were faced by the noblest souls of the country.

But it must not be understood that Swamiji wanted the members of the Order to engage themselves in mere social service activities which are neither attuned to nor inspired by the highest ideal. To produce the desired effect—the liberation of aspirants from the bondage of ignorance—it must be undertaken in a spirit of utter dispassion and whole-hearted worship. It is not the work, but the spirit behind it that determines the result. A Bhakta works for others in a spirit of willing service realising the presence of the Lord in all created beings. Keeping the Highest Truth always before him, the Jnani sees this *Sanghata*, the aggregate of body, senses and mind—performing the work while he tries to put his own self—the Immutable Atman—as witness for whom no work is possible in any way. "You may perform any work you like," Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "by keeping the knowledge of Adwita in your pocket." Therefore Swamiji prescribed a rigorous course of self-discipline for the workers of the Order. Renunciation of egoism, unequivocal and uncompromising, must be evinced by every worker in as complete a degree as possible. Self-introspection and self-analysis he must keep before him day and night. Discrimination will be to him not a mere ratiocination of logic, but the supreme means for the clarification of his vision which can alone enable the Sadhaka to keep clear of the many thorns that are always strewn broadcast in the path of a worker. Expansion of heart supplies him with the real animus for work which otherwise becomes dull, insipid and mechanical and deprives the worker of the endless joy that love alone can bestow. From this view point Swamiji said that a worker is like a bird supplied with two wings and a tail. As the bird can sail through air by means of wings, the tail helping it to remain steady, so also a worker can satisfactorily perform his function with the help of Jnana and Bhakti and practising meditation unceasingly which alone

can keep him steady and firm in the midst of work. Really speaking, only a man of renunciation—imbued with love—can give you the marvellous experience of standing alone, discarding all help, breasting the storms of life, of working without any sense of recompense, without any sense of putrid duty. Untied to the apron-strings of worldly attachment, a Sannyasin, alone, can work whole life joyful, free—not goaded on to work like slaves by false human love or ambition. On this ideal Swamiji wanted to establish the Math and Mission and he expects every worker to follow it as pillar of smoke by day and column of fire at night.

Before going into the details of work mapped out by Swamiji for the Math and Mission it is necessary to tell you as briefly as possible the condition of the time which necessitated the incarnation of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna.

In a word, the evil legacies of past hundreds of years of our national degeneration were epitomised in the nineteenth century. Religion degraded itself into fanatical sects often at loggerheads with one another. Forgetting the immortal truths of the Vedas, people clung to meaningless customs and the ignorant priests and Mohants were looked upon as ministering angels of religion. Intellectually, we became totally bankrupt. The Vedas and the Upanishads were sealed books to the intelligentia of the country. And physically, thanks to the slavery of hundreds of years, we ceased to be men. The ideal of national solidarity was totally forgotten. Introduction of English language and foreign culture at this psychological period of our national life was the last straw on the camel's back. Our young men drank deep from the sparkling glass of Western culture and became intoxicated. They openly scoffed at the wisdom of our forefathers and fell back upon foreign savants for inspiration and guidance. The glittering prospect and persuasive influence of Christian religion—in striking contrast with the then moribund state of our Sanatan Dharma—snatched away not a few bright youths from the fold of Hinduism. The arresting physical prowess of the foreigners and their power of organisation and discipline overawed us

as a nation and in no time we were reduced to mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, helpless and hapless in the midst of such overwhelming circumstances. Nothing but ruination stared blank at our face and the Aryan culture was about to be engulfed in the yawning chasm when God incarnated Himself again through His infinite grace as Sri Ramakrishna Deva, the brightest star that had hitherto shone in the spiritual firmament of India, combining in a single person the sharp intellect of Sankara and the infinite love of Buddha.

Friends, the meeting of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda at Dakshineswar brings before our vision another episode of our national life that happened thousands of years ago into whose antiquity, history dares not peep. On that momentous occasion when India was torn asunder with fratricidal wars and when culture and religion sank to the nadir of degradation, there met at the field of Kurukshetra two personalities of equally striking importance: Sri Krishna delivered to Arjuna the great message of the Gita for reviving the Aryan civilisation through the teachings of the Vedas. Sree Ramakrishna too, after years of patient training one day transmitted to his blessed disciple the divine spark and made him the happy instrument to usher in the New Age through the revivification of Sanatan Dharma. Well, time will not permit me to take you through the seven years of Swamiji's life after the passing away of his Master—years of study and travels, meditation and realisations—before he stood at the Parliament of Religions as the proud envoy of India—the Asia of Asia—encircled with the aureole of glory and triumph. Fully equipped with the knowledge of the classes and the masses, society and organisation, past tradition and present development, historical factors and subtle religious forces of the East and the West alike, he, with the keen vision of a Prophet, formulated a scheme of work for India and the World—a few basic principles of which I shall try to lay before you in this meeting.

In order to place India to the high pedestal of her former glory, one thing that formed the theme of his thought by day

and dream of sleep at night was the re-Aryanisation of India—the restoration of our past Aryan culture. Now what is meant by this Aryan culture? What is its special characteristic that has surrounded it by a halo of grandeur? The alpha and omega of the Aryan culture is the realisation of truth—the discovery of Unity based upon the transcendental experience of a seer. It helps every one to attain the right to Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha—virtue, wealth, desire and liberation. Its aim is to make the outgoing tendencies of mind inward. It acknowledges the bondage of society in order to enable the individual social unit to ultimately soar into that which lies beyond. It preaches vanity and utter evanescence of frets, foams and facile radiances of the surface and urges man to dive deep wherein lie gems of truth. It gradually prepares the individual and society to forget the glamour of the tinsels and baubles of earthly enjoyments and realise that about which the scriptures say :

न तच्चूर्ध्रीं भाति न चन्द्रतारकं ।  
नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमन्तिः ॥  
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं ।  
तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥

The grandest feature of the Aryan culture is its ideal of *Abhayam* and *Vairagyam*—fearlessness and renunciation—that results from the realisation of One Existence because fear always proceeds from the consciousness of two. The rationale of its theory of love is not that of brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God—which is a fragile bond—but the grand discovery of Abheda or non-difference when man seeing Him alone existing everywhere from the stump to the highest manifestation of relative existence, cannot but project his love upon everything. Broad as the sky and deep as the ocean, it provides accommodation for infinite variety of thoughts, thousands of creeds and dogmas because it is conscious that all paths ultimately lead to the realisation of the same truth.

Therefore, the Aryan culture is an apotheosis of toleration. In India alone it has been made possible for temple, mosque and church to exist side by side. This Aryanism of all—irrespective of caste and creed—claiming Bharatbarsha as mother-land, is possible, nay perfectly natural, without disturbing the existing different religious groupings or denominations. There is an inherent charm, a fascination in the Aryan culture, which can assimilate all and the influence of which is simply irresistible. This is the verdict of history. It is apparent to a deep observer how even the truculent element of Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism has been gradually feeling its influence and how a thoughtful section of the votaries of these religions have been thinking in Aryan way. This Aryanism of India can restore her national solidarity. It will alone be able to make room for infinite diversities of thought and thus solve the great problem of national unity, perhaps the greatest problem of the day. Building of Indian National life can proceed along this line alone. Expediency—political or otherwise—is a master juggler who holds in his hand a magic Kaleidoscope and takes malicious delight in making and breaking sworn alliances and combinations. It is quite apparent that this Aryanism of the Indian mind can remove those dark forces which have caused our national downfall and are still pressing on our chest like a horrible nightmare.

To bring about this happy consummation, the two factors that are the greatest desiderata are religion and education. Education is the preparation of the individual for the community, and his religious training is the core of that preparation. Education must be freed from its parochial and communalistic settings. Its aim should be to bring out the perfection that is already in man. Out of the trouble and tragedy of the present time there must emerge a moral and intellectual revival of a simplicity and scope to draw together men of alien races and discrete traditions into one common and sustained way of living for the world's service. Education is, as Swamiji has said, life-building, man-making and character-building assimilation of ideas. We want that education by which

character is formed, strength of mind increased and intellect expanded and by which one can stand on his own feet. It was a dream of his life to turn the Belur Math into a finished University, in which along with philosophical and religious culture there will be a fully equipped Technical Institute. Heaven alone knows when his ideas will be materialised.

Aiming to enable man to discover the divinity that is already in him, religious emotion—stripped of corruption and freed from its priestly entanglements—must blow through life like a great wind, bursting the doors and flinging open the shutters of individual life making many things possible and easy that in these days of exhaustion seem almost too difficult to desire. For the propagation of such catholic religion there must be trained a band of workers who will disseminate the wonderful truths of the Upanishads and make them accessible to all—from the Brahmins to the rag-tag and bobtail of society. They will try by life, example and teachings to establish the unification of religions. Religion will aim at dispelling weakness—physical, mental and spiritual. With the voice of a trumpet the Swamiji said, “Teach yourself, teach everyone his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul to see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and every thing that is excellent will come when the sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.”

The vanguard of the army who will put forth the stubborn fight for evolving renascent India will naturally be the Hindus to whom has been bequeathed the precious legacies of their Aryan forefathers. And first of all they must set their own house in order and remove from their society the many accretions that have encrusted its pure ideal. Therefore for the regeneration of the Hindu society, Swami Vivekananda has given us a definite scheme of work which I shall briefly present before you.

At the very outset the Swamiji said that the Math would not pay much attention to social reform. For, social evils are a sort of disease on the social body and if that body be nourished by education and food those evils will die of them-

selves. Hence instead of wasting its energy in the trumpeting of social evils, it should be the aim of the Math to nourish the body. Still the Swamiji was keenly alive to some of our outstanding social evils which must arrest our immediate attention.

The great danger that threatens us at present is the right apprehension of the gradual disappearance of our race by the steady dwindling away of the number of Hindus through conversion to other religions due, to a great extent, to the working of some of our own iniquitous social laws. Our first and foremost duty is to put an immediate stop to this work of conversion and reclaim those with all honour that want to come back to Hinduism and throw before them all the privileges of our society. Proceeding along the lines of least resistance and freeing our mind from all thoughts of expediency, we should spread broadcast the ideals of Hinduism, give every one the Aryan rights, invite all without distinction to the Aryan scriptures and modes of spiritual practice. Full rights of Aryan religion must be accorded even to those castes which have slightly deviated from it for want of necessary *Sanskaras* by giving them *sanskaras* again. In order to wipe out all suspicions and misgivings from the minds of so-called untouchables and depressed classes about the exclusive enjoyment and usurpation of social amenities by the higher castes, we must broaden the Hindu society by changing our present angle of vision and treating every one down to the Chandalas as component and useful parts of the Hindu society.

Castes will remain among the Hindus whatever others may say about it. Diversity is the very life of the world and this diversity of caste can never be destroyed. When there will be no necessity of the Sudra; Vaisya and Kshatriya powers, when man will be born with *Yoga* powers, when spiritual force will completely triumph over material force ; when disease and grief will no more overtake the human body, the sense organs will no more be able to go against the mind, when the application of brute force will be completely effaced from man's memory, like a dream of primeval days ; when love will be the

only motive power in all actions on this earth ;—then only the whole mankind will be endowed with Brahmanical qualities and attain Brahmanhood. Then alone the distinction of caste will be at an end ushering in the Satya Yuga visualised by the ancient Rishis.

Again, the division into castes, such as the Brahmin and Kshatriya is not to be condemned but it is the difference in privilege that has proved the great bane of our society. The fight should not go on against the caste, but against the exclusive privileges. "Hence," said the Swamiji, "our object is not to destroy caste distinctions but to equalise the distinctions of privileges." It is impossible to withhold any longer the privileges from the non-privileged classes. The principles of equality and the report of the struggle for the destruction of privileges among the Western nations are gradually finding their way into the sleeping nation and kindling a ray of hope in the hearts of us, the Indians, dispirited though we are. The majesty of the Atman, the common heritage of all, is slowly entering into arteries of this country through various channels, good or bad. The non-privileged classes are demanding back their forfeited rights. If at this juncture religion and learning remain limited to a particular class or caste that learning and religion will die.

Then, gentlemen, we have got a foreign policy though it looks strange for a subject nation to cherish that idea. We have got to contribute our quota to the civilization of the West. Though we have to learn a great deal from the nations of the West about the material amenities of life, we have to give them a little lesson about spirituality. It is impossible, in this age, for a nation to live on exclusive ideals. Europe has frankly exhibited its bankruptcy in spiritual life. The inculcation of the truth of the Vedanta philosophy is an imperative necessity for the West if it wants to enjoy peace on earth and goodwill among men. The countries of the West stand to-day like armed camps. Everywhere is seen the grinning of teeth and clenching of fists. But behind their

exhibition of strength and show of power is revealed in all its irony the helplessness of the weak. Why has the West kept itself to-day in this abnormal state of war preparation? This is mainly due to a sense of perpetual fear lest any other nation should come forward and snatch the victim from her outstretched jaws. To maintain her fancied rights, the West has been making enormous preparations and by the inevitable law of nature is slowly dying under the weight of her own enormity. Why do you, Oh Europe, cast a look of lust upon other men's property, and why this continual oblation into the fire of ambition? Going to the root of the matter, one detects signs of weakness in the minds of European people. Owing to the rampant growth of materialism, the men of the West think themselves hopelessly dependent upon inert and lifeless matter to conduce to their happiness and glory. Life has become intolerable without the transitory paraphernalia of modern civilisation, its "beer and skittles." Oh, what a pity! the King of kings, the omnipotent and all-powerful Man, is a slave of inert matter? Forgetting the glory of his own resplendent Self, he goes as a beggar to a mere shadow of his for peace and happiness! What a mockery of happiness! Europe must discover the glory of Soul so that she may turn her senses from the vain pursuit of happiness from ephemeral phenomena. The fear of the West is the outcome of the idea of separation. She has raised a fancied barrier between East and West, and thus maintains a vigilant watch in order to protect herself from the encroachment of an imaginary rival. And this feeling of duality and separation is at the root of Europe's unbounded greed and lust. Advaita Vedanta—the brightest gem of the Aryan culture—lays the axe to the root of such an imaginary separation and urges all to realise the Oneness of existence. So long as the European does not discover the unity of the whole universe and does not think himself as the eternal Soul, birthless, deathless and infinite, before whose magnitude the sun, the moon and the whole creation appear like a drop in the ocean, before whose resplendence the whole space melts into

nothingness—so long as he does not realise this ideal of Advaita Vedanta, peace and happiness will ever recede from before him like the proverbial cup of Tantalus, however he may try to fill his coffers with all the wealth of "Ormuz and Ind" and however he may try to guard it with all the strength of his muscle and steel. We must go to them as teachers of spirituality—our God-appointed role from time immemorial.

Gentlemen, these are some of the ideas and ideals which the great Swami has left to us for execution. And the Rama-krishna Mission has been trying in its own humble way, for the last quarter of the century to fulfil the sacred trust given to it, through its various activities. One thing I must make clear to you all. Swami Vivekananda or his teachings are not the monopoly of us, the members of this Math and Mission. They are the common property of all. They are being accepted everywhere. Every one who will put his shoulder to the wheel set agoing by the incarnation of Sri Ramakrishna will be blessed. We invite all to discharge the great responsibility that the great Swami has left as a legacy to every one of our countrymen. Our appeal goes specially to the youths, pure and fresh like flowers without blemish as such are always accepted of God.

India shall rise and once more occupy her proud position in the comity of nations. The Ancient Mother is slowly rising from the slumber of ages and ere long, before her, reborn and rejuvenated the whole world will bring its tribute and homage. The tidal wave has already gone forth ; the die is cast ; the Rubicon is crossed:

The spent up force never comes back again, the worn out night is gone for ever. Let the past be buried in the dead past. From the worship of the past let us turn our mind to the worship of the present—the living and real present. With the name of God on our lips and undying faith within, let us spring to the arena of activity as instruments in His hands and realise by fulfilling our duties the Immortality that is ours and ours by birthright.

## FAITH AND BELIEF.

BY CAPT. A. U. MOSCA.

I am going to discourse about belief and faith. You may say they are synonymous. Let me tell you they are not. In fact they are antonyms. If you have faith you need no belief. You may believe every word that was spoken since the beginning of time and have not so much as a whiff of faith. This is an unusual proposition. Let me illustrate it.

I shall begin by stating that it extends to the whole illimitable field of human awareness. To-day, I shall only deal with it in connection with the essence of religion : spirituality.

In the first instance, what is belief and what is faith? Belief is the result of that mental operation by which we accept as truth something we know not. Faith is that state of the soul by which we sense a fact as an intense reality, irrespective of intellectual corroboration. When we acquiesce in a statement because it is in the scriptures, and for that reason alone, we believe. When we become aware of anything, beyond the influence of specified knowledge, and accept it as truth integral, we perform an act of faith. Faith is, therefore, the perfecting of knowledge ; belief is the negation of it. This difference is subtle but accessible, if you make a mental effort. I cannot make you realise it anymore than I can eat in your stead. But just as I can help you to feed by supplying you with well prepared food, it is possible to assist you in this mental work by pointing out a few things generally overlooked.

To begin with, let me put down, side by side, some aspects of faith and belief. First and foremost : you can destroy belief, faith will challenge any such attempt. If to him who believes I can in any way prove his fallacy, he will believe no longer. This is why men who connect the idea of God with the tenets of a specified creed may turn into atheists when the platform upon which their belief stood is withdrawn. He who has faith is indifferent to any corroboration. He requires it not. You may marshall the best arguments of higher criticism, you may show him unmistakably that Christ

never existed, that Buddha was only a name, that Rama was not a man but a historical period, Krishna a character invented by the poetic author of the Gita, our Ramakrishna a mere lunatic, you may even bring him to agree with you on all these points,—but will you shake his faith? Not a jot. If he be willing to argue at all, he will return you this unanswerable retort: "Yes! All this is very interesting and convincing, but I do feel Christ, or Buddha, or Ramakrishna." If again you say it is madness to feel a thing which does not exist, he will add: "True, but if I am mad I can't help it." There you are. You have dashed against faith. Had you argued with belief you would have raised a doubt, at least. Not so in this case. Faith is unshakable.

Submit a man of faith and a man of belief to the tests of life and see what happens. The believer will be shocked that God forces upon him such trials, he will pray for relief. If his appeal be not met he will begin to doubt first the wisdom, the love of God for his creature, then God's very existence. The man of faith will not pray for help, will not even ask for strength to bear his misfortunes, he will take it that what is happening about him is the very best thing that might take place. His mind will remain unmoved.

When you grieve for a bereavement, when you fear death, when you make provision for the future, you show want of faith as well as absence of common-sense. If you think that by hoarding a few coins you have protected your old age from penury, I will tell you that numberless men, cleverer than any of us, and immensely richer, have been ruined in a few hours' time. If that does not happen to you too, it is not because of your wisdom in taking precautions, but simply because you are allowed to do so successfully by Him who rules. When you bewail the loss of a child or a wife you call it love. It is not. You are only mourning your own loss. If the son or wife were mine you would not give their death a single thought. What you love in them is your own proprietorship, otherwise you would be downright glad they have gone to a better place. In the same way do you misname belief and call it faith.

When you postulate the existence of God, you state also an idea of permanence. For the man of faith this lastingness is not conditioned by any form of existence, he feels he cannot die. Death to him is only a change of mode. He who only believes has no such certainty. If he cannot escape death he will show helpless resignation at best. The man of faith will look upon death with indifference or curiosity, according to his temperament. But he knows no such resignation. His is a state of willingness. He is as ready to live a century as to die this very minute. He may be scholarly or illiterate, rich or poor, you will always find this characteristic in his outlook. It is the only test we have for distinguishing between him (of faith) and a simple believer.

From belief you cannot come to faith. You may believe for æons, it will lead you nowhere. If you have faith you have completed your journey towards wisdom. You may thereafter be put in any condition by Him whose purposes you cannot fathom. It is no longer your business, but His. You need not worry. In fact you won't worry. But if you fear death for yourself or your beloved, if you wonder what will happen to you once you go to the other side, if there is another side at all, if you mistrust the morrow and think you can meet it by your own means, if you can pray for material or even spiritual betterment, if you think that you have the power to ruin or save yourself, then you have no faith. As long as you believe in God in this way, as long as you look upon Ramakrishna or any God-man who is your Ideal in this fashion, will you wallow in doubt, in misery, in impotence, will you remain steeped in ignorance.

Why do you give such an absolute importance to what this or that disciple of Ramakrishna tells you about Him? Will that teach you anything definite? No. They can only tell you what they have seen of Him, what they have grasped of His multiform complexity. No two of them have seen their Master in the same aspect. Does not this fact show you the way? Does it not tell you that every one of us has an individual standpoint from which to look and see? And how then

can their vision lead you to yours? Nevertheless, there is something in them that does help. It is not what they say, it is what they do. Their actions, their behaviours must you study and copy whole-heartedly.

This is also the whole trend of Sree Ramakrishna's life. He never said: the scriptures purport this, therefore it must be so. But, the scriptures say it, let me see for myself. After attaining personal corroboration he used to say: the *shastras* tell us this and I know it is so. Had he been content to accept their statements without personal verification, he would have had no necessity to undergo so much struggle and toil to work the problem out for himself, and he would have stayed in a condition of individual ignorance.

Here is another instance. Suppose you knew not what *rasagulla* and *sandesh* are and suppose I were to tell you the former is preferable to the latter because it smoothly glides down your gullet while the other hopelessly sticks to it, till you wash it down, would you know what they really are? Evidently not. If you wanted to know them personally you would have to partake of both. Thereafter you no longer believe, you know. On the other hand, would you be justified in holding that because I have said the truth about sweetmeats I must also be right when I tell you that roasted dog-flesh is tastier than any other, that a stitch in time might not only not save you nine but compel you to put in eighteen, or that your head is bigger than your hat? Manifestly not. Nevertheless, should you deny it without reflection you would be as greatly mistaken, because for any view whatsoever there is something to say. So for a Chinaman's taste there is no better meal than that afforded by a baked whelp. Were you to stitch up a button on the wrong side of your coat you would have to cut it loose and sew it up again. Twice the same work of nine stitches makes eighteen. As to your head being bigger than your hat, why! knock it against your best friend's and see what happens: Bumps and lumps, which would make both of your heads grow bigger than your hats. So you see you can

neither deny nor accept anything you have not experienced personally.

My knowledge, therefore, cannot be your knowledge. If it could be of any real use to you but as a guide, you would not have to work up your own salvation, I might do it for you. The fact that this is not possible ought to make it clear that you can attain the purpose of existence only by acquiring, through your own efforts, what nobody can give you: namely, that personal knowledge of God, which is faith.

Faith is the synthetic grasp consequent on individual realizations, small and numberless. They may have occurred in lives long past. They may not be in the conscious plane. Still they loom gigantic in your subconscious, they make you dare anything, they make you see things in their true relation. Your outlook of life will to normal men appear bordering on lunacy, you may be angry with God if the role given you does not suit your momentary taste, you may even curse Him, but you will never doubt. Your cursing will pertain of the nature of chafing, you might experience for Him that feeling which we undergo when our best beloved child turns a hard-earned banknote into a paper-boat, but you cannot for that stop loving him.

I know a man who went mad for God. After a long, wearying struggle he realized the truth of God's existence. There followed a period of exhaustion and mental unrest. His mind, however, had grown so accustomed to God as an object of thought that under the fearful strains of mental pangs he could find relief in one way only. That was by lying down in a quiet corner and talking to Ramakrishna as casually as I converse with you now. During these talks he would call Ramakrishna all sorts of bad names. He would tell him how unfair he was to forsake him in his struggles, how mean to have made things so hard for his devotee, and so on. These verbal wrangles would at times last hours. They were always followed by deep sleep and a dream wherein he would see himself resting his weary brow on Ramakrishna's lap. Sometimes his legs would be bristling with pricks and thorns that

painfully wounded the devotee's face, again they would be wonderfully soft. But however smooth or briery the couch still was it always the same lap, while Ramakrishna's countenance above his devotee's writhing body would be beaming with tender concern. Though our man did often fret and fume, the thought of praying for anything was obnoxious to him beyond description. Now, that was faith, indeed, unless you choose to call it madness. That faith Christ, and Ramakrishna and Vivekananda spoke of as the mightiest force existing, that is the essence of wisdom which obtains in the spiritual field, that is the thing which no amount of external authority will lead you to, that is a state which even renunciation, brahmacharya, lifelong meditation won't give you, unless you back them up with intelligent discrimination and experimentation. He who has faith has nothing to renounce, nothing to preserve, nothing to wish for; consciously or unconsciously he possesses all. His appointed work might be that of a Ravana or that of a Rama, whatever he does is done, through him, by God alone. Such men of faith are beyond our understanding; we may know them only by becoming what they are, only by acquiring that faith which is as the sap of their personality. But how this, will you query? By discarding beliefs as such, by not accepting any longer whatever is said or written about God, about life, about everything; by not accepting it, I say, on the strength of any authority but your own. What you must do is to take them up as working hypotheses in the true value of the expression which is actual experimentation. If you have not the power, the mental poise, the daring required to bring your endeavour to success, go as far as you can. No two men are up to the same pitch, but every man has a pitch. If you cannot think out your own understanding into a complete religious system, live up to what you can make out of it. In no case, accept a thing because it is said in books which men call sacred, or because it is uttered by a man who is thought of as saintly, or because it is believed in by other men and live contended without knowing it for yourself. This is the

last injunction of Buddha, it is also the acme of his philosophy and indeed of all Men of God. It is much better to be agnostic than an idle believer, for if you believe nothing you are of necessity open to inspiration from your own inner self, but if you already have crammed up your mind with things you cling to undiscriminatingly, you are deaf to the voice speaking in your heart. Remember, however, agnosticism is not denial. A thing you cannot prove cannot anymore be contested. So keep an open mind, and strive for illumination in whatever form it may suit God's purposes that you should attain it. Only be sincere with yourself.

This is no small thing. But to speak truth and follow any idea to its ultimate logical conclusion is the worst offence you may give society. From the dawn of history men have been known to be burnt, hanged or otherwise done away with for the simple reason that they were sincere. Our society, our lives east and west of Suez alike, are so closely inter-woven with hypocrisy and make-believe that most of the time we are unable to detect it. In this assembly every one of us thinks of himself in terms of spirituality but were I to wish you all a speedy death and prompt meeting in Vaikunta, at the feet of our Ramakrishna, of our Vivekananda whom we pretend to love above all, none of you but would take my wish amiss. Whenever this question of life and death is touched upon the clearest thinker is befogged and loses his moorings.

Of all of us here, even among those who have made it their foremost duty to work up their salvation, that is to bring about a conscious and permanent communion with God, how many are there who seriously look upon the question in this light? It was, however, Ramakrishna's outlook of life. He was continuously panting for God, he often had to curb down the craving for altogether losing himself in the bliss of Samadhi. He really stuck to the body because of his self-appointed mission, but did he tarry, though he too had human feelings? He too loved the people round him as every man does love his relations. Although His disciples were his sons, did he ever wish

he could stay with them longer than necessary? Now, we who say we love Ramakrishna and Swamiji, we who have not the solace of Sree Ramakrishna's lapses into Samadhi, do we ever wish our work were over, do we long to go and join them? If you say you are already with them, you deceive yourselves and play at make-believe; for, a thing you are unaware of, is non-existent as far as you are concerned.

Again, we all think we would be able to appreciate Sree Ramakrishna were he back among us now. Let me tell you that not ten out of this gathering of several hundreds would look upon him but as a madman if he behaved as he did behave at the time of his sadhana. They would misunderstand him as his contemporaries did. Want of faith and fear of death cloud our minds. Unless we get rid of the latter and acquire faith we may paint with *gerrua* not only our rags but our very skin but remain as far from the purpose of life as can be.

As you know Catholics believe they are in a state of grace immediately after confession and communion. Well! I made it my business for a time to go and face people, just out of church, with the two following questions:

"Were you to die now at this very moment would you go to heaven?" "Certainly." This was the first answer.

"Given that you take heaven as a better place than this valley of tears, would you like to die just now as you are sure of not missing the very narrow gate therein?"

"Are you crazy"? This was the second answer.

I see in my diary I put the questions to 127 persons, 36 of whom were priests. Not one that said he would like to go and sit by Christ's side for eternity, but all sorts of irrelevant reasons were brought forth in favour of a new lease of life. So much for their sincerity.

You believe in India that the people here are more spiritual than we in the west. Make it a point, then, of going and asking people emerging from a plunge in the Ganges, when they are washed clean of any sin whatsoever, whether they

would fain go to Vaikunta then and there, and see what you get. I am dead certain you will be taken for a dangerous lunatic and the police will be shouted for. So much for these persons' sincerity. Let us be honest with ourselves, then, and acknowledge we are great humbugs. I don't say one should go and confide it to the man in the street. Only when we shave our chins in the morning we would do well to look at the face reflected in our mirror, fix the fellow straight between the eyes and tell him: "I have found you out. You are an impostor. I wouldn't shout it from the house-top but between you and me, you're a damned liar." I often do have such exchange of compliments with the chap in the looking-glass. I think it is a very helpful as well as entertaining exercise.

The next best thing to do is not to assume a name one has no right to. Don't pretend you are *tyagis* if you can enjoy anything while I am in want of it. Remember Swamiji spent a whole night crying because he was in a luxurious place while so many men had not even a stone to lay their heads upon. Don't say you rely upon God if you can hoard up, with an eye for the future, while others starve just now. Don't think you are generous when you give a beggar a paltry coin expecting Providence to bless an undertaking which will yield you thousands ; you are simply trying to strike a good bargain thereby. Unless you are ready to give up your very life for any man in the street you have no fellow-feeling. Unless you can face death with unruffled brows, at any time, you have no faith in God. If you can be utterly sincere with yourself and free your mind of whatever you have not personally experienced, you have done all you could towards acquiring that faith which is the crown of human endeavour. God will do the rest. He will take you to His own place in the show, at the time and in the fashion He thinks suitable. By sincerity will you reach faith. By faith, and by faith alone can you demonstrate to a woeful world that Sree Ramakrishna and Swamiji have not lived in vain, that they have not been clamouring in the wilderness. By faith alone will you make their mission come to fruition through you.

## RUDRADHYAYA

BY SWAMI KAMALESWARANANDA

The Rudradhyaya, or the Chapter about the God Rudra,\* is the sixteenth Chapter in the White Yajur Veda. In this Chapter the three main subjects dealt with in the Vedas, namely, Work, Worship and Knowledge, are so clearly and harmoniously treated that the student who is anxious to learn the fundamental principles of Vedic teaching, cannot do better than give his attention to it. From the study of this chapter he will also realise how firmly based in the Vedic Scriptures is that synthesis of devotion and knowledge which is characteristic of the teaching of the Ramakrishna Mission.

Like the rest of the Yajur Veda the Chapter is in "unfettered words" i.e. prose, but it contains also many verses from the Rigveda in various kinds of Vedic versification. The whole chapter recurs with variations in the Krishna Yajur Veda.

The promotion of Vedic studies was one of the objects most dear to the heart of Swami Vivekananda. When he was living at the Belur Math after his return from the West, he took pains to collect copies of the Sanhitas and Brahmanas for the Math library and arranged for their systematic study under competent teachers. Into this, as into all his undertakings, he poured all the energies of his soul. On being asked by Swami Premananda (of holy memory) about the value of the Vedas, he spoke for about two hours, declaring that through the study of the Vedas we could reach our goal of a true and universal religion. He often insisted that the Holy Vedas should be adopted as "Our only Scripture" and the rules he framed for the Ramakrishna Math are based on the same principle. But Swamiji was carried away by the hand of an inscrutable providence and it is left for us to realise his dream of a revival of Vedic learning.

\* This chapter was used at the opening Homa ceremony of this Convention.

The Chapter under consideration deals with Rudra and Rudra means Giver of Knowledge.

The Knowledge he gives is that of God as the All-pervading Spirit. We read in the Sruti—तत् सदा तदेवानुप्राविश्टः

The ordinary man, distracted by the things of this world, fails to realise God's indwelling presence in every object of the universe. Only the happy few, and they, only after hard spiritual struggles, succeed in so tranquillising the waves of the mind that they attain a glimpse of the Life Eternal, and so find satisfaction and peace. God is seen by them to be the Great and Eternal Good, the Hope and Light of the World, the Source of all Energy, the First and Last Reality, the Beginning and End of all that Is, Was or Shall Be. Those who have so seen God will proclaim their discovery to the world :—

"All this," they will say, "Is the Lord."

All this is the Great.

All this is the Soul.

All this is the Universal Spirit.

All this is Brahma.

Whatever is, is He.

He is all that is.

Devotion to this Indwelling God is the key-note of the Rudradhyaya. Every line from the 17th mantra to the 47th repeats the refrain—

Namah, namah ; Bow to Him, Bow to Him.  
as though the writer could not insist too often on the necessity of humiliation before God. The same teaching is found in the Atharva Veda, 11. 1. 6.—

I bow to Thee in the morning,  
I bow to Thee at night,  
I bow to Thee by day.

Again in the Rig Veda we read

The best is bowing.....It holds together the Earth and  
the Sky.

By it our sins are destroyed.

Again in B. Gita 9, 34 Krishna instructs Arjuna in similar terms.

Me should you worship.  
Me should you salute.  
And Me shall you have.

Such adoration is the highest form of worship. It is the basis of all true self-surrender and consequently the only pathway into the presence of God.

From a literary point of view the Chapter has much to commend it. The language is often strikingly beautiful. The sage seems to stand on the shore of a boundless ocean, absorbed in prayer.

To Thee, O Lord, I bow who art beyond the seas,  
who art on this side of the sea,  
who art in the sailing vessels,  
who art in the depths of the sea,  
who art on the borders of the  
coast-lands,  
who art on the foaming waves,  
who art in the sands of the shore,  
who art in the waters at the  
river's mouth,  
who art in the little pebbles,  
who art in the calm expanse.

O Deity of Matted Locks,

I bow to Thee who art in the barren soil where  
there is not a blade of grass  
who art in the flowing water  
courses.

From a philosophical standpoint the Chapter is equally acceptable to the Theist (Dvaitavadin or Bhakta) and the Monist (Advaitavadin or Jnanin). The Theist recognises the distinction between the Worshipper and the Object of worship. He sees in God his Ideal, the embodiment of all that is Good, and he hails this God, not only as the Lord of his own heart, but also as the Indwelling Spirit of the whole universe. He traces the touch of this Spirit in the whole order of nature.

With such a philosophical background to his religion he finds the devotional spirit of the Rudradhyaya entirely to his taste.

The Monist in the same way finds here nothing with which to quarrel. He holds that nothing exists apart from Brahma. All the apparent objects of the phenomenal world are only superimposed on Brahma by Ignorance. The only real existence is the Eternal "Chit" (Pure Consciousness) which is also Being (Sat) and Bliss (Ananda). This ultimate Reality is never differentiated nor transformed into anything other than itself. The Sruti may indeed (out of deference to the weakness of human intelligence) speak of it as so differentiated with a view to arousing the soul from the stupor of Ignorance, but in fact "Sat-Chit-Ananda" remains one, free, unattached and all-inclusive. Accordingly the Rudradhyaya does not hesitate to include in its address of adoration even that which is evil.

"Salutation to Cheats and Impostors

Salutation to the Chiefs of Thieves and Robbers."

Nothing must be excluded from God.

O Benevolent One I bow to Thee,

Thou art the Carpenter and the Chariot-builder,

Thou art the Hunter and the Fowler,

and the Chaser of animals with dogs.

So the great Swami Vivekananda used to speak of God not only as the great and powerful, but also as the weak and despised. "The poor Narayana," he used to say, "the illiterate Narayana, the Chandala Narayana."

The great Sri Ramkrishna has left us a most valuable illustration of this important doctrine. He lived almost perpetually immersed in Universal Consciousness, and even on the rare occasions when he returned to ordinary levels, he never forgot that the objects of the phenomenal world are only manifestations of the one universal substance (Chit). He is reported to have said "Do you know what I see around me? All these things are the same Rama with masks on." These simple words contain profound philosophical truth. A mask may be horrible, calculated to strike terror into the hearts of children or it may be ridiculous and throw them into fits of

laughter. Yet the wearer of the mask is neither horrible nor ridiculous. So the one unconditioned, undifferentiated Chit appears through the mask of Maya as all the various objects of the visible world, and gives to one man joy and to another sorrow.

It is important to notice that our chapter is full of that spirit of Bhakti (or loving devotion) which is characteristic of theistic religion. It has been affirmed that Bhakti is not found in the Vedas but only appears in the Mahabharata and the Gita and Puranas. It is true that the word Bhakti occurs only in the Shvetasvatara Upanishad in the phrase 'यस्तद्वे परा भक्तिः' but the idea is one of the commonplaces of Vedic literature. In the chapter we are studying it is particularly prominent.

One feature of Bhakti religion is its faith in a Personal God. In this chapter Rudra is unmistakably personal. He has two arms, an image, a visible appearance. We find the poet singing :—

“Your body is of scarlet colour,  
And your throat is blue.”

And again—

“Place your trident and other weapons on a high tree,  
Come to us in your tiger skin bearing only your bow.”  
(Mantras 47 and 51).

Another feature of religion of this type is prayer and again the Rudradhyaya is rich in such gems as this :—

O fulfiller of all wishes,

Shower your blessings on our children and our  
descendants.

O Rudra,

Save these men and beasts from all diseases,  
and dispel their fear.

O Rudra,

Blessed be our children and our relatives,  
Blessed be our cattle and domestic animals,  
Let our neighbours flourish and our dwelling  
villages be secure.

One more prayer, which we offer as our hearts' greeting to the great Lord of all, may fitly conclude this paper:—

I bow to Him,  
from whom flows the highest good and  
emancipation,

I bow to Him,  
who confers on us earthly prosperity,  
who holds in his hands things good both for this  
world and the next,  
who is the Personification of the Good,  
who into that same Good converts his  
worshippers.

### THE CRY OF AGONY.

BY BRAHMACHARI KUMARA CHAITANYA

"Like a child sent with a fluttering light  
To feel his way along a gusty night,  
Man walks the world ;  
Again and yet again  
The lamp shall be by fits of  
Passion slain ;  
But shall not He  
Who sent him from the door  
Re-light the lamp  
Once more and yet once more?"

### I

To us of little vision, this life is a reality. Yea, sometimes a very grim one. It was the cold weather of 1924 in one of the biggest coalfields of Hazaribagh, Behar. We were two. He—a medical practitioner, and I a beggar. Smallpox had broken out. We were out inspecting a few segregated quarantine huts. We saw a number of poor coal-diggers, wretched, almost nude. Some among them were crying aloud out of sore sufferings and woes they could not stand. Some were down on death-bed with the last groan of agony on their lips before

the tragedy would end. 'You sanctioned so much ration, Sir,' they said to their dear Doctor, 'but the middle men, a cruel lot, have denied most of it to us.'

Was it a living instance of sucking the life-blood of the masses and waxing fat on it? Who can tell?

Some eight thousands of them were gathered together in the same field for a mess of bread—grown up in dirt and filth we cannot conceive of,—for it surpassed the wretched picture usually associated with the slums of our urban life,—putting on the scantiest raiment amidst the raging cold of that hilly district, getting weekly wages on Sundays, spending everything the next day in wine and enjoyment, absolutely without education,—mere preys to a system of commercialised vice which an all-assertive industrial civilisation had set up,—altogether a pitiable sight! A glimpse of 'Darkest Bhâratavarsha'—our submerged masses! One felt it was almost a sacrilege to talk to them of a spiritual integration of things we are so much in need of.

Palæo-Indologists' India and our own familiar land are quite different tales. We know modern alchemy exhibited its amazing miracle when it produced the brightest colours out of coal-tar, formerly put aside as a worthless refuse stuff. We sigh for a greater human artist that can make honourable men of us,—a sunken lot, altogether haunted and hopeless. Pliny the Elder, as a spirited citizen of the Eternal City, lamented the drain of Roman gold into India. But we know to-day how the process has undergone a complete change.

The present writer looked at them for days and months together. Then he retired—ultimately to become mere moody and thoughtful over it.—What was he? He looked at himself,—young in age, but definitely lacking in the amount of physical stamina which could carry him through, with of course other shortcomings,—yet an aspirant of the highest Truth!

If we look at the youth of India, we have to hope against hope. His extra-Indian compeers possess a decided superiority over him, inasmuch as they have a healthier, brighter and better outlook of life on the very face of it. Folly of

follies, we are *dreaming* to build a future Indian nation on the solid foundation of a wide-spread illiteracy! We live in the reign of disease, death and poverty, not knowing when our serfdom would end. Before our very eyes we see and most of all *feel* our degeneracy and degradation.

What is the way out? No external party is to be blamed. We ourselves are the greatest culprits.

A house divided against itself cannot stand. From the days of Sudâsa and the Battle of Ten Kings in the Rig-Veda, the very dawn of Indo-Aryan civilisation, to Porus, prominent in the eventful episode of Alexander's expedition in the Punjab, to Prithviraj-Jayachandra before the hegemony of the Pathans, to the mutually quarrelling Marathas in the 18th century,—right up to Mirzafar in the memorable days of Lord Clive,—all through it is a history of political disunion and disruption writ large—uniformly repeating itself.

We glibly talk of India's message to the world. And a band of us is rightly rousing itself to carry and spread it broadcast all over the world. Well and good. But let us approach it to-day from a different point of view and set our own house in order, first and foremost. But where is that troop of enthusiasts, who would face the stronghold of antagonists in the land of Ind and hold aloft the Ideal of Creative Altruism, as living contradictions to the learned plea that it is a mere antiquated, unsuitable, anachronistic piece of Mediævalism?

### III

From our own world of intense individual struggle we look up to the dual personality of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. We go deeper to discover not two really, but the same Book of Life with a double unfoldment.

Who can fathom the struggle of great souls—in a sense perhaps keener, acuter at every step?

In the now famous discourse upon his Master the Swami thus charges us all in the end:

"Men and women of to-day, if there be among you any pure fresh flower, let it be laid on the altar of God!"

Indeed, the Master's life was a blazing fire of Divine Love and Ecstasy. An approach to it, howsoever critical and analytic, convinces us all that a super-conscious transcendent realisation is the only thing worth fighting for. As a matter of fact Ramakrishna symbolises Renunciation. Blessed are they that can seek after the Kingdom of Heaven and with a soldier's unflinching courage and unquenchable zeal burn themselves up inch by inch in the quest of the Holy Grail along a path which the Vedas tremble to say—**चुरस्य धारा निश्चिता दुरव्यया दुर्गम्यथस्तु कवयो वदन्ति**—difficult to tread like the sharp edge of a razor!

Let us here sound a note of caution. In our extra-critical scientific attempt to humanise Sri Ramakrishna—a cry recently raised—we must not totally blind ourselves to the plane of transcendent realisations in which his mind almost always moved and which necessarily formed the essential factor of his personality. If we are sincere enough, his life acts as a challenge to us—a sort of a dynamite sure to break up, burn and blaze the apparently solid rock of our lives, replete with worldly progress and achievements, with hankerings of the flesh rampant in all.

But the researches of the medical materialism of our own day are trying their utmost to interpret spiritual aspirations in terms of physical ailment. A St. Theresa of blessed memory is perhaps pronounced to be attacked with duodenal catarrh or something akin to it. To people of this school a St. Paul or a St. Francis, incidentally every spiritual aspirant, is a mere anti-social misanthrope, a diseased maniac with brain-fag, an unbalanced, effeminate, sentimental enthusiast! What wonder that Sri Ramakrishna was called a madman by a Bengalee of light and leading?

To such we reverentially offer the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, yet another couple of Indian Supermen of the last century. Let them give up the transcendental outlook if they so like and weigh these personalities in the

balance first as men of character, from a plain, ordinary point of view. One's highest and best conceptions of sanity and perfect manliness can be set up as the standard of judgment.

Specially—for us whose minds cannot move beyond the senseplane, what is the special message of Sri Ramakrishna?

We *talk* of morality, for we know bitterly the want of it. But he was a moral man *par excellence*, unapproachable,—purity personified. For he came to fulfil what was said by the sages of old: वशे छि यस्तेन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता—His inner knowledge alone is well established, who has his senses under control.

His love of truth is yet another feature to be noted. To be truthful became an instinct with him. Hardly shall we find another man of word like him, and the common Hindi adage was most forcibly fulfilled in him—सर्वं वौ बात छाथी की ढांत—a man's word is verily like the tusk of an elephant; when it has once come out there is no more retraction.

When we consider his breadth of vision, his openness and toleration, we are bound to say that in a sense (not of course academic) he was perhaps the best type of an educated man we can conceive of, although he had not much of literacy. A rare teacher, too, who could minister unto all according to their respective needs and capacities. Although himself a Sannyasin, he never said 'Give up' to everybody. This aspect of his life is best appreciated with reference to his original contributions to the philosophy and religion of India, incidentally of the world. Attuned to the scientific age which had already come in, his approach to the eternal verities of life, however, was definitely not from the side of intellect, merely theoretical, although the greatest intellects have tried to show from the ancient scriptures that he came to fulfil by his life what had been said ages ago. Metaphysics and science sing his glory to-day. But he was a shrewd practical man. By an intense Sadhana prolonged for more than a decade he personally realised the Truth *through every path* and substantiated what had been declared of old in the Vedic texts—एक

त्रुट्या वदन्ति—Truth is one, sages call It variously. But his testimony was unique.

In the early religious history of India and of the world the truth of only one path at a time (so far as its practical carrying out in life was concerned) was declared by respective teachers—such as the worship of Varuna in the early Rig-Vedic age, of Indra and other deities later on, Jinism of Pârsva and Mahâvira, Aryadhamma of Buddhagotama, Saivism, Vaishnavism, Saktism and other minor Paurânika cults, theistic teachings of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, our own monistic, dualistic and qualified monistic schemes of life—and so on. It was left for Sri Ramakrishna and the Swami to unite all "in the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World." For Christianity and Islam also claimed the Master's attention. In him the old order and the new melted and emerged together. In the culture-history of humanity he stands as the beginning of the New—that which is yet TO BE. In the realm of Self-culture and higher thought it was his privilege to *con-specialise* what had so long remained *dis-specialised*—to use a pertinent phrase of Prof. Patrick Geddes—a leading modern Sociologist. A perusal of Ramakrishna's life is in itself a liberal education. It is sure to mete out a shattering blow to our innate dogmatism, bigotry, intolerance and narrow conventionalism.

The Swami Vivekananda, his chief apostle, elaborated the same theme and gave a complete Vedantic scheme, on the solid basis of which civic society could be built and evolved,—that according to our fitness we can work out our salvation through an intense spiritual discipline, or an application to the domains of art and literature, trade and commerce, science and social service. Religion is not something strange, quixotic, fit for the cloister, but an essential factor in our work-a-day life. The Master and his Elect have proved for good that character alone is the one sure barometer which can measure our inner advancement. How we are fearless and ready to sacrifice the less for the greater, free and sincere to live, die and hope for

the ignorant, the down-trodden, the distressed,—these are some of the salient, decisive factors—our positive qualities.

Like the Father, the Son was a synthesis of the eternal polarities of life,—intensely idealistic, scrupulously pragmatic. Dynamic activity, *Rajas*, and the intense rest, the calmness of *Sattva*, could be found in him side by side. He made it clear that a scientific acumen and a religious aspiration are never contradictory. But ultimately the heart must rule, intuition should be made supreme. Specialists, it is said, in different branches of study stood amazed at his general grasp in their respective fields, just as athletes wondered at that symmetric, Hellenic type of ideal physical beauty that he represented. Yet all was subordinated to the one spiritual theme, the dominant key-note of that musical, transcendent life of *Samâdhi*.

Amidst all our downfall ought not an example like this to be our 'friend, philosopher and guide'?

The Swami was perhaps the strongest contradiction of that popular misconception that too much stress on spirituality has marred all our worldly activities. It is a historical blunder to suppose that we are bound to lag behind in respect of worldly attainments if we stick to our supreme ideal of Renunciation. The Vedic literature convinces us that though dominantly religious, we never lagged behind in any of the domains of worldly progress,—our achievements in positive, exact sciences, trade and industry, art, agriculture and literature were not of a mean order. The Maurya and Gupta ages, and the age of Harshavardhana were glorious chapters in the culture-history of India,—both secular and spiritual.

#### IV

To conclude with a personal note. Our individual lives reveal too many disparities and insufficiencies when we confront these dual fountain-heads of holiness and self-denial. But what stops our fear? 'It is not what man does, but what he *will do*'.

Perhaps yet another stronger reason. We who have taken refuge in Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, not of course in any

dogmatic, denominational sense, are verily children of Immortality, for the ideas and ideals represented by them cannot die.

Thank our stars,—had we been Spartan children the nation would perhaps have compelled us to be devoured by vultures, the grossest way for the fittest of former days to survive! What harm if our strength fails and we have to succumb, to make room for the stronger more vigorous, and more gifted Soldiers of Liberty to come and take up their banner and fight to a finish? Mere camp followers that we are, let us depart with these words on our lips—

All that I could never be,  
All that was not in me,  
Is yet there—in His hands  
Who planned the perfect whole!

## VEDANTA AND THE PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

BY SWAMI VASUDEVANANDA.

In this convention of the Ramakrishna Mission I wish to dwell upon the religious ideal of Vedanta as expounded by Swami Vivekananda, the great founder of this religious institution. Swamiji founded his religion upon Vedanta—a religion based on the broad principles of universal toleration and sympathy. Sympathy cannot have its fullest significance in a religion in which such expressions as "Sin," "Sinners" and "Fallen" find place. What man can speak of sympathy that has not realised the great truth जीवो ब्रह्मेव नापरः—the Jiva or individual soul and Brahman or the Universal Soul are one in essence. Vedantins always believe that the whole universe is progressing towards an absolute ideal through a variety of experiences, be they good or bad. We see the world from our own particular angle of vision only and try to mould it according to that narrow standard.

But if each individual man has got an ideal of his own, which on a closer examination proves to be ever changing, what then should be the standard of unity underlying these diverse ideals? Is it possible for us to mould all these different elements into a harmonious whole or shall we find out our own destiny in the light of our own ideal, indifferent to our surroundings good or bad? Or should we have fullest sympathy and toleration for the views and actions of others and even what appears to be their frailties?

Various social organisations amongst different nations represent only social struggles for their respective progress ; in like manner different religions represent men's struggles for their spiritual uplift. And as different social organisations are constantly quarrelling and fighting amongst themselves for their right to live according to their own standard and their right to modify their environments in a way which they believe to be congenial to their particular standard of living, so the various religious organisations are at war amongst themselves and are wrangling and fighting not so much to follow their own ideal of spiritual progress as to push forward their particular doctrines at the cost of those of others. In the midst of all these dissentient and discordant elements there has always been a school of thought that has been trying to harmonise them all. And that is the religion of Vedanta which has been taken as the ideal by the followers of Sree Ramakrishna-Vivekananda.

Truly has Prof. Max Muller said "If I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thought of the Greeks and the Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective, which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life not for this life only but a transfigured and eternal life, again I should point to India."

The synthesis of thought underlying the teachings of the different Indian schools is in that universal religion or philosophy known as the Vedanta which embraces within its

broad fold the infinite variety of all modes of thought. India has given to humanity, at least the main outline of the whole philosophy and religion of the world. The main features of this outline may be summed up in the following way :—

1. That there is only one Ultimate Reality, the "Brahman" from which the Universe has evolved. It is self-existent and it alone is Real (Sat). Not having come out of anything else, It is Eternal and Real. Everything else in the Universe is unreal—as being effects only—their existence depending absolutely on their ultimate cause which is Brahman. They sometimes appear to exist, while at other time they seem to disappear. They are subject to time, space and causation. This is called Samsara which means motion and change.

2. "Brahman" is all-pervading. There is no object which has not Brahman for its substratum. Divorced from Brahman, the object is a nonentity. No object has therefore an existence,—that is independent of or apart from Brahman. Its reality is only relative and phenomenal.

3. While Brahman is thus immanent, it is also transcendent. Only a portion, as it were, of the Brahmic sphere is occupied by the universe.

4. Brahman is all intelligence (Chit), infinite in its nature and therefore Eternal.

5. It is also all Bliss (Ananda).

6. The Sat, Chit and Ananda referred to above are considered by Acharya Sankara and other great thinkers of the Advaita School to be the essence of Brahman and not its attributes, for they say that being eternal and changeless it cannot have any attributes. Acharya Ramanuja and others of the Vishistadvaita School on the other hand maintain that Brahman is not without the attributes of goodness, justice, mercy and so forth.

7. Though Brahman is one, it also manifests itself as many, by its own will. It is thus also many when looked at from the point of view of the Universe.

8. The universe is born from Brahman. It is brought into

being by the word or logos, thought or will whatever you may choose to call it—or by Emanation or Evolution. It rests in Brahman and in time dissolves in Brahman. In other words Brahman is the "primum mobile" of the Universe.

Brahman is thus that in which we "live and move and have our being." The Universe ever remains one within Brahman and is never cognised apart from it.

9. Brahman is the efficient as well as the material cause of the Universe. According to the Advaita School of Vedantists the Brahman appears as the Universe by Maya or illusion, which is considered also as the power of Brahman and in essence identical with it. The Qualified Monistic School of Ramanuja however considers the Universe as a real change of Brahman.

10. Rigorous monists like Acharya Sankara assert that individual souls (*Jiva*) are identical with Brahman, while others like Acharya Ramanuja posit the individuality of the souls but admit that they are the modes (*Prakara*) of Brahman and have a parallel existence with Brahman.

11. Brahman is not the originator of Sin or Evil. It is all of man's making and he comes under its influence only when he forgets his own real self.

12. Every embodied existence with its environment is the result of one's past Karma which has matured for fruition. Such matured Karma is called *Prarabdha*. *Prarabdha* cannot be escaped but must be worked out. But as for Karma which has not yet ripened for fruition—Karma which is *Sanchita* (stored up)—man has the power to destroy its evil effects by meritorious deeds and thus accelerate the perfection which is his goal.

13. The Vedantin thus recognises the doctrine of the freedom of will. Man's happiness and misery, he says, depend entirely on his own self. He himself is the architect of his own fortune.

14. His life on earth is one of relative existence, of probation and struggle, for in his ignorance he thinks of bodily existence only and regards that as his permanent and real

life and seeks to find pleasure and happiness in "things earthly." In this state his actions are egoistic and selfish.

15. The Vedanta accordingly lays down rules for the social, moral and spiritual development of man and enjoins the performance of duties by which he gradually transcends his lower self and lives a higher and purer life and advances onward till his self merges in the universal self.

16. The duties which the Vedanta enjoins have reference to the relation in which man stands to himself, to his kith and kin, to his community, to his country, to the whole mankind, nay to the whole universe as part of one organism.

The Vedanta lays down that these duties are to be performed without any hope of reward or gain and the doer must be thoroughly unattached.

17. The Karma thus enjoined necessarily tends to the purification and uplift of one's mind, to the ennobling of one's character, the acquisition of higher spiritual powers, by which one is capable of realizing that the individual soul is not merely related to Brahman but is identical with it.

18. True salvation, or to use a better expression, Moksha, consists in the complete realization of this identity.

19. Until this highest state of spiritual perfection is reached, until the idea of "I" and "Thou," of "Mine" and "Thine," has completely been abnegated, man cannot possibly deny the reality of this Universe. Till then he is bound to recognise the threefold distinction of God, man and the universe and to attend to his multifarious duties, social, political, moral and spiritual. To him at that stage the world is not illusory, nor is his relation to the world an illusion.

It is only when the *idea of individuality* (Ahankriti) has become completely extinct and the great Truth "Tattvamasi," "That thou art," is fully realised by one's own experience that the real nature of the supreme self and the identity of the Universal Self with the Individual Self are realised, and the world is completely transformed and appears in a new light. The world of name and form as we see due to ignorance vanishes for ever and in its stead one finds only the manifesta-

tion of the One Indivisible Absolute. It is not possible for any of us to have a clearer understanding of this from the plane in which we live and move. To go beyond is to transcend the limits of human mind.

Sree Ramakrishna realized these principles of Religion as points of Unity among the multifarious aspects of human mind. Religion is realization of Truth. It does not consist in words, doctrines, theories or dogmas. Religion consists in the search after truth which certainly can never be the monopoly of any particular sect or society. Any attempt by any society or organisation to confine religion within its limited fold and preach its particular doctrines to the negation of others is *little short of dragging religion down to the level of a business concern* and in that case religion is sure to lose its spiritual basis. In the East, the home of faith, the Vedanta concedes to every individual absolute liberty to choose his own religion and follow it. Religion is always an individual matter. Do not therefore disturb the faith of any man by thrusting your views on him but try to help him on, if that lies in your power by developing his faith from his point of view. Meet him at his own level and lift him up towards his goal if you can. The preachers of negation who seek to break down and destroy individual faith are already too many. They do not in any way contribute to the real progress of humanity. Religions are not contradictory ; they are only different phases of the human mind in its search after the true self. More religions are yet to come. God's book is not yet finished.

No search has been dearer to human heart than that which brings us light from the universal Truth which is wrapped up in mystery. No study has taken so much of human energy, whether in times past or present, as the study of soul, of God and of the hereafter. However immersed we are in our daily occupation, in our ambitions and struggles, there comes in the life of all a pause, when the mind craves for a knowledge of the great unknown beyond the veil of what we call death. At times we get a glimpse of the realm beyond the senses and

we naturally strive to get a fuller knowledge of that unknown. This struggle constitutes one's religion.

We cannot do better than sum up the principles of this Universal Religion by quoting the three great truths proclaimed by Swami Vivekananda.

(1) Each soul is potentially divine and the goal is to manifest the divinity that is within, by controlling nature, external and internal.

(2) We shall have to do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one or more or all these and be free.

(3) This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, dogmas, rituals, books, temples, and forms are but secondary details.

### THE CLARION CALL.

BY SWAMI JNANESHWARANANDA.

It is a remarkable law of nature which we clearly observe everyday in the phenomenal world around us that wherever and whenever there is a real demand for anything, there is the supply. The flower blossoms, the wind blows, the river flows, clouds appear, hurricanes and storms arise, only to meet this demand. This fact holds good not only in the world of external nature but if we can get a peep into the more extensive and more powerful world of thoughts and ideas—which is in fact the very basis of the world of matter—we are astonished to find the same plan existing there also. Whenever the world needs any idea or ideal for the re-adjustment of her basic principles, Mahamaya or the primal energy behind this universe, sends to the world some gigantic personality who by force of his unique character and by his wonderful attainments makes the current of life flow vigorously in a new channel altogether.

The religious history of the world records the advent of many such heroes in different ages and climes to fulfil the peculiar needs of the time, and they have been called by

various names such as Rishis, Avatars, Bodhisattwas, Tirthankaras, the Son of God, or the Rassul. It is an interesting fact to note that the advent of such personalities in all ages and countries has always infused new vigour not only into the religious life of the race or the country but has given new impetus to and a fuller outlook into all phases of its life. The social, economic and sometimes political life of the country has received new vitality and has sometimes undergone a thorough transformation at their hands. Even art, science, poetry, music and painting have made great progress under their aegis. Just as a plant is truly fed when it is watered at the roots, its flowers, leaves and foliage all being supplied thereby with the life-giving sap, in the same way, a country is bound to flourish in all phases of human endeavour if it is nourished by the life-giving ideals of religion and the practical application of its glorious principles in work-a-day life. For religion solves the most fundamental problems of human life, supplies man with a nobler and wider outlook and when rightly understood and earnestly practised places man in absolute possession of infinite strength, intense activity with untiring energy and above all, inexhaustible bliss of mind.

Religion has been defined by Swami Vivekananda as 'the manifestation of divinity already in man.' Man is already divine—he is already perfect, he has got infinite power lying dormant in him. Religion teaches him to manifest that. Man wants eternal existence, absolute knowledge and infinite bliss, but knows not that these are already in him; he has covered them up with the veil of ignorance. Religion serves to tear off this veil and make man the possessor of unconditioned freedom and uninterrupted bliss. All religious creeds, dogmas and rituals, all prayers, all forms of sadhana are only different ways and means to remove the barriers that hinder man from finding that infinite store of eternal bliss which is inherent in him.

From the very dawn of creation man has been trying to break his bondage—the snares that keep him back from the realisation of infinite existence, absolute knowledge and eternal

bliss. Nature, external and internal, stands in the way of his attainment of the goal. This hindrance of nature has given birth to the tendency to struggle, which forms the very basis of life. All our activities, all our speculations, in short every thing that life means, owe their origin to this struggle of the human soul to manifest its real nature. What are the modern scientific researches and progress of knowledge but the attempt to gain for man, more knowledge, more bliss and longer life—nay absolute freedom? Religion studies the various aspects of this struggle, finds out the cause of the bondage, analyses it and teaches man to go beyond all and be eternally free. Thus religion is not something fundamentally separate and distinct from what we call secular sciences. The true motive and outlook of both are the same, that is to say, to make man attain absolute perfection in life by breaking the bondage of nature.

But nature is not confined to the external things or forces alone. She has her mightier and subtler existence in the internal forces of beings, of which the external form is but the gross manifestation. Religion teaches to control and exercise one's power over that subtler nature. The question of questions that has given rise to the philosophical speculations of all countries, comes as a natural consequence to this :—What is man? What is nature? What is perfection? Whence this bondage? Is it ever possible to go beyond it? "Let alone all these knotty problems ; they can never be solved by reasoning and argumentation ; I want to go beyond the miseries of bondage—I cannot rest satisfied in slavery—my very being wants freedom—absolute, bliss absolute" is the voice of the inner being which feels in spite of all these bondages that freedom is his birthright—absolute, uninterrupted bliss his very nature. The philosophy of the Hindus, the Vedanta, establishes that "Satchidanandam" is the very nature of the individual soul and lays down various methods for attaining that. तत्त्वमसि—"Thou art that" thunders forth the voice of all the Upanishads—the state of absolute bliss which you are seeking is within you—know, that and you are free. But

philosophers have studied the problem from different angles of vision and have pictured the same truth with different degrees of light and shade. The same person viewed from different standpoints of relationship, appears different to different persons—some look upon him as father, some as son, others as brother, still others as husband, friend or foe and each one of them behaves quite differently from the other ; but all of them are right in regard to their respective attitudes. Similarly the same truth is seen differently by sages and saints from different angles of vision and called by different names, such as Brahman, Atman, Shiva, Vishnu, Kali, Allah, God or the like. Thus the ideal of absolute truth, freedom and bliss or whatever we might call it has been realised by many sages both of India and of other lands as the inherent qualities of the Supreme Being Who is separate and distinct from Man and Nature. Man may stand in some fixed relation with Him—call it Shanta, Dasya, Sakhya, Vatsalya or Madhura Bhava or by any other name analogous to that and thus live in blessed communion with Him. This standpoint has been called by philosophers as the Dvaitavada (द्वैतवाद) or Dualism, and the path to realise that is Bhakti or Devotion. In this process, the lower Ego or 'Ahamkara' stands as the barrier, and devotion purifies the 'Antahkarana' (mind-stuff) of man and makes it reflective and stainless like the clear surface of the mirror, upon which the grace, bliss or sweetness of God is fully reflected.

There is another standpoint from which the truth is seen to be immanent in nature. The individual soul or the Jiva, according to this standpoint is not altogether separate and distinct from the Supreme Soul or Paramatman which forms the essence of the individual souls or Jivas and is the immanent regulator (अनर्थमौ ) of the Universe. By constant meditation upon the qualities of the Lord, and by His grace a devotee reaches the region of Brahman (ब्रह्मचीक) and there rests in ever-lasting bliss. This view is known as 'Qualified Monism' (विशिष्टाङ्गतवा ). There is a third standpoint which holds that the individual soul is potentially divine ; absolute freedom is its inherent nature. "The soul is all in all—none

else exists." It is ignorance that has kept the true nature of the soul veiled from man. True knowledge—the knowledge that the Jiva and the Brahman are one—can alone tear this veil off and enable man to stand face to face with truth and be merged in the ocean of absolute bliss.

For a long period in the religious history of India, there have been quarrels and dissensions amongst the followers of these different schools. But Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda have demonstrated before the world that these are only different aspects of the same truth looked at from different angles of vision and that all these different paths ultimately lead to the same goal. However, if we analyse all these different views and theories about religion and philosophy, we find one thing common to all. It is some ideal state which is either a plane of subjective consciousness or an objective region of bliss which all of them aim at. There are according to them all, some barriers or obstacles to the realisation of that goal. Some call these obstacles by the name of Maya or Avidya and try to remove them by Vidya or True Knowledge—they are the Jnanins. Some call the obstacles by the name of "chittavrittis" or the accumulated samskaras (resultant of past actions lying dormant in the mind-stuff) and want to eradicate them by concentration of mind and other practices of Yoga—they are the Yogis. There are others who find the obstacles in the lower Ego and try to purify it by devotion and service of the Lord—they are the Bhaktas. There are still others who hold that attachment is the root of all bondages ; so their sole effort is to work for others, unattached—they are the Karma Yogis. The Buddhists, the Christians and the Mahomedans also find the very same obstacles to their spiritual progress in Mara or Satan and want to get rid of them by means of devotion to God, by performance of good work or by discrimination. All these bear testimony to the fact that all religions try to realise the same truth and lay down different ways and means to suit different tastes and temperaments. Let everyone proceed along his own chosen path to reach the goal and ultimately he will find that all reach the same truth which

is beyond all name and form. Religion is realisation—knowing the truth by one's personal experience—it is being and becoming. It does not consist in big talks and subtle perorations, in meaningless forms and intricate formulas. Religion expands the heart, rouses the finest of feelings, sweetens life and removes all narrowness.

Suppose different persons start for the same place by different routes, but if without caring to proceed towards the goal they stop on the way and fight with one another, would they ever reach the goal? Whereas if they do not care to stop or quarrel and proceed directly towards the goal, finally all would reach the destination, meet one another and would become inseparable friends. The different systems of religion extant in the world are but different paths leading to the same goal. But alas, most people nowadays waste much of their energy in such petty quarrels and thus bring about their own and the country's doom. The world, for the last few centuries has become an awful scene of such narrow sectarian feuds and stands in sore need of the message of sincerity, love and toleration. Religion in most places has become the object of mockery and hatred; consequently a force to vindicate and rehabilitate religion in its true spirit and value in life and society is the dire necessity of the age. In this era of immense practicality religion should be demonstrated with the accuracy of scientific experiments. These are the demands of the time and those that have eyes can see clearly how they have been fulfilled in Ramakrishna—Vivekananda. The unique life of Sree Ramakrishna has opened the eyes of the whole world to the truths underlying all religions; his was a life which was a veritable embodiment of the truths laid down in the Vedas, the Tantras, the Puranas, the Bible and the Quran. He lived a life which unmistakably marked the fulfilment of all the different religions and 'isms.' The highest ideals of renunciation, love and truth are wonderfully illustrated in his life, which serves as an unerring guide for all travellers in the path of spirituality to-day and will continue to do so for generations to

come. The world is yet to know the workings of this gigantic force.

One question is often asked by many—"Does religion in any way clash with our honest secular life and thwart its progress?" Or in other words "Would religion help us in the struggles of our ordinary work-a-day life, in our woes and worries of the world, or would it cruelly maim and disable that?" This is a question which has been asked and discussed since the very dawn of religious history. The Upanishads for the first time discussed and solved this momentous problem. Then it was again raised and fully considered in the Gita ; the Tantras and the Puranas have also thrown considerable light on the problem. Again with the progress of modern culture, the wonderful achievements of science confronted religion on the same ground. It is Sree Ramakrishna, the unlettered saint of Dakshineswar, who has illustrated in his life that one may have at one's command the highest state of spiritual illumination—the Nirvikalpa Samadhi, and at the same time may be very keen and particular about one's ordinary daily concerns. One day when Sree Ramakrishna was taking his meal, a young disciple cut a piece of lemon for him and carelessly left the remaining portion on the floor. Sree Ramakrishna noticed that, mildly rebuked him saying 'waste not, want not' and directed the disciple to wrap up the extra bit of lemon with a piece of wet cloth and put it carefully on the shelf so that he might have the piece at the next meal. Another day the master accompanied by his favourite attendant, Latoo (afterwards Swami Adbhutananda) went to the house of some devotee where a kirtan or psalmodic congregation had been arranged for the occasion. Now Sree Ramakrishna, as you all know, very frequently went into Samadhi—a state of transcendent spiritual vision, so that he would oftentimes absolutely lose all consciousness of the body and could scarcely keep his garments in order. Latoo also used sometimes to have *Bhava* or ecstatic states then. The functions over, when the Master was about to return to Dakshineswar he noticed that Latoo had forgotten to take his towel and some other small things. The

Master seemed to be much vexed and censured him saying—“Hullo Latoo, I wonder how that small degree of ecstasy you have now and then could make you so unmindful of your simple duty of taking care of my few things, while I, who am almost all the time absorbed in such visions and can scarcely look after myself do not lose sight of the smallest concerns of life. You must be very careful not to do such things in future.” In thousand and one instances like this regarding his living, eating, dressing and all other concerns of every-day life Sree Ramakrishna showed an amount of observation and carefulness, which to the ordinary mind seem at once a puzzle and a contradiction. He demonstrated in life that even when the mind is in perfect tune with the infinite the duties and details of daily life are not to be overlooked ; rather these can be attended to with a nobler and wider outlook.

Swami Vivekananda wanted to preach a man-making religion—a religion that would produce all-round men—men strong in body, keen in intellect and soft in feelings, in short, men of head and heart. A religion that develops the one at the cost of the other is an one-sided religion. It was his dream to train up a band of workers who would have nothing as their own—would remain absorbed in meditation at one moment and would at the next set themselves with as much alacrity to gardening and such other laborious works, would even be ready to go to the market to sell the produce of their own garden and again when required stand before an assembly to explain and teach the highest principles of religion and science and at another time be on the side of the sick and the distressed to render them whatever relief they may stand in need of. He wanted to train up a band of noble workers who would maintain perfect rest and calm in the midst of intense work. Undoubtedly a religion that would produce such men is the crying need of the country to-day. The highest scientific culture, the most perfect discipline and the wonderful power of organisation of the West must be coupled with the ideal of supreme renunciation and service of the East. Religion does not mean the wearing of a sullen owl-like countenance—always

sad and sombre, as if all joys of life have been snatched out of him. Religion does not mean the development of queer and quaint habits, unnatural and artificial demeanour and the exhibition of moods and gestures or the performance of miracles. It is the growth of sincerity, simplicity, and purity of a child blended and harmonised with the vigour, strength and wisdom of a saint. Sree Ramakrishna and Vivekananda came to revivify that religion—a religion that would bring about a harmonious development and fulfilment of all the different phases of life and gradually lead men on to the highest state of spiritual illumination. Thus the wonderful discoveries of science and subtleties of philosophic insight would only manifest the wisdom of God ; art, literature, painting, music etc.

—His Beauty ; patriotism, social service etc.—His Love. Thus all our endeavours in life, our thoughts, our trials and tribulations, our successes and failures would be directed towards that one end, namely to manifest the divinity inherent in us. Religion does not exclude any of the honest pursuits from its scope, rather it fulfils them all. Thus when a student is labouring hard for his success in studies, a tradesman in his trade, an artist in his art, they are never to think that they are working out of the path of religion, for religion does not consist in the performance of this or that duty only ; it embraces all spheres of life, and when rightly co-ordinated with selfless aims and principles, places all of them on a nobler basis. Religion is selflessness ; the total annihilation of the lower ego can alone reveal the divinity within. That which is done to pamper the lower self even if it be worship, sacrifice, charity or anything—is never religion, it only serves to drag the soul down lower and lower. On the other hand, whatever is done to efface the selfish yearnings, no matter if it be cleaning the shoes or sweeping the street or any pursuit however humble, is religion ; for that helps man to rise higher and higher up the ladder of Truth. That which is done to 'take' is trade and that which is done to 'give,' is religion. Just like a faithful gardener we are to work in this garden of God and exert our utmost to produce the best fruits and flowers and offer them to Him

alone. If a gardener sets his hand on the products of the garden and opens a secret trade of his own, with his master's things, he is a thief, a scoundrel and is unfit to obtain the grace of his master. In this world we should think ourselves like the gardener of the Almighty Lord and work for His love and grace alone. So, whenever we desire to take to ourselves the fruits of our Karma we become unworthy of His grace.

Before concluding this discourse let me emphasise here that the twin personalities of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda came for the well-being of the whole world, they have by their lives and teachings, given a new interpretation to the Sanatana Dharma, they have shown in their wonderful lives what are the essentials and what are the non-essentials in Religion, they have practically demonstrated by their actions and achievements the truth of the experiences of all the seers of all ages and countries, and above all, they have demonstrated to the whole world that the truths of Religion can be made intensely practical in life. These twin souls have solved the most serious and fundamental problems of the day. They came for the salvation of the world. They have prepared the food and made it ready for the people who are really hungry and are eager to appease their hunger. Come and partake of it, for theirs is the food which gives immortality. They have kindled the holy fire, come ye that are shivering with the chill blast of life and are benumbed almost to the point of death, come ye to the fire to warm yourselves and enjoy the everlasting life of supreme bliss. Hearken ye all, the clear voice of the Divine Redeemer calling forth :—

“ARISE, AWAKE AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS  
REACHED.”

## SOME PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL SERVICE.

BY DR. D. N. MAITRA.

While I deeply appreciate the kind feelings that have prompted the organisers of this unique Convention to extend an invitation to a most humble and insignificant man like myself, I cannot conceal the sense of diffidence and embarrassment that such a call has imposed upon me. For to be frank and sincere, I am keenly and painfully conscious of my unworthiness to address a brotherhood of selfless workers who have had the inspiration and strength to brush aside all obstacles and impediments that stood in the way of fulfilment of that whole-hearted devotion and dedication to the service of God and Humanity which has been the outstanding features of your noble mission. I can, therefore, only reconcile the fact of my acceptance of your kind invitation with the feeling that I appear before you merely as a witness to bear testimony to such experience as it has been my privilege to earn as an humble worker of the Bengal Social Service League. And I may take it that you also wish to know firsthand something of our work, ideas and ideals in this brief discourse. Therein lies the great value of such conferences where we may exchange our views and experiences, compare and take notes, remove misconceptions, learn many new things; and may apply that knowledge to a better conduct of ourselves and a fuller co-operation between the respective organisations. It would perhaps best serve our purpose if I were to give you a short history of our origin, a general programme of our work and a practical Scheme for Mass Education.

The origin of the League was apparently sudden and unpremeditated. I have used the word 'apparently' in the sense that the unconscious or subconscious stage of development of this movement was neither manifest to our physical eye nor to our wide-awake consciousness; and also to mean that there is no movement that is not the resultant of courses of "unseen" events or currents of thought that have been moving towards a "sudden" emergence as an outward expression. It was in

the afternoon of the 12th day of Magh (26th January) in 1915 when I casually (in the course of my professional rounds) entered the Prayer Hall of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj to listen to the discussion in a Conference on "Service and worship" that was opened by Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee, editor of the "Modern Review" and "Pravasi," a respected professor of my college days. Within three weeks of this an inaugural meeting was convened. As stated in the letter of invitation the object of the meeting was to inaugurate the foundation of a non-sectarian organisation for the educational, economic, sanitary and social welfare of the people through united and constructive efforts. A preliminary programme of the work which the League would take up was also circulated at the meeting, which was then followed by enrolment of members. In another three week's time, at a general meeting of members, committees were formed, office-bearers elected and our final and permanent programme of work adopted.

Your quiet and undemonstrative work, I need hardly mention in this connection, has been a great example before us. Our ideal, from the very beginning, has been that of a spring which issues from a high mountain slope filled with the urge of meeting the ocean and of serving the land and the people on its course, overcoming obstacles, digging its own path in response to and in harmony with the bends and slopes of the land and receiving and sending out tributaries of service on its forward and onward flow.

Without going into the detailed items of our programme let me only mention that it has a three-fold objective :

- (1) the study of Social Service or Research Work
- (2) preaching of Social Service or Propaganda Work
- (3) pursuit of Social Service or Actual Work.

Like a 'Tourists' guide I shall now hurriedly take you through a brief survey of some of our humble endeavours which may deserve a little more than a passing reference.

Our social study consisted mainly in sending out detailed questionnaire sheets on Village social study, the filling up of

which required a careful and accurate study of the conditions of the village in all the smallest details of its educational, sanitary, social, economic, moral and historical aspects, of its needs, of what had been done to remove them and to what extent. These sheets not only trained people in accurate observation and thoughtful investigation, but supplied very valuable data for further study. These "questionnaire sheets" of social study contained at least two dozen definite hints and directions for social service, quite a number of which any individual or any local organisation could easily take up for its guidance.

The study of social facts and conditions received a great impetus through our Social Service Exhibition Movement. The charts and slides based on a very careful study and analysis of local conditions of a district or a province of this country and of other countries enabled us to present facts, figures and conclusions derived from such comparative study, in a pleasing and attractive form.

And it has been our aim and ambition from the outset, which we have been able to realise so far only partially—to conduct a permanent social service Training Class in Calcutta (and other suitable places) where workers would receive regular training in all branches of social service and earn diplomas in theoretical and practical work, on the result of careful examination ; so that by and by a regular service of qualified social workers (Social Welfare Service) might grow up, such as the medical, educational and ecclesiastical services ; and the Government, the District Boards and Municipalities, zamindars, mill-owners, private individuals, welfare societies, religious and other organisations might very profitably engage their services for any particular kind of village reconstruction or social welfare work, in their respective areas. Such a school should have attached to it a library and a permanent *Social Service Museum* of charts, models and other exhibits, which would be open to the public and where regular demonstrations would be held from time to time.

With regard to the preaching of social service or propaganda work,—our activities run along three main lines: viz:—

Preaching the ideals and importance of social service, through talks, lectures, conferences and articles, so that the country may be covered with such organisations, in whatever name they might be called, each serving its own locality, through local agents, according to the urgency of local needs ; organising a regular popular educational movement by means of lantern lectures, and what has been a new experiment in this country,—by means of "Social Service Exhibitions."

Our lantern lectures dealt with such subjects as agriculture, cottage or home industries, co-operative systems, hygiene and sanitation, food and diet, first aid, maternity and child welfare, ideals of education, travels, biographies, stories from our scriptures, social evils and various useful subjects, such as progress of science, art, and so on. We have been systematically delivering such lectures at a number of High English Schools, Girls' Schools and Training Colleges every year by rotation ; and in this matter we have received much help and encouragement from the Education Department of the Government.

The Social Service Exhibition movement proved more effective and appealing method of popular instruction. The root principle of this method of popular education is the presentation of dry facts and figures in such a pleasant and easily intelligible form, as would arrest attention, arouse interest and stimulate action.

"As feathers to the arrow's flight  
A surer course impart,  
So Truth when winged by Fancy's light  
May surer reach the heart."

Even the illiterate may 'read' these pictorial charts which are drawn correct to the scale, the people can take their time to study and digest the lessons sought to be conveyed through these charts, and literate people and students can and do take notes from facts and figures ; and this certainly is not possible in the case of a lantern lecture where slide follows slide in quick succession.

Regarding the third item of our programme, viz: the pursuit of social service or actual work, to which the other two items viz: study and propaganda are, in a manner, auxiliary, I do not wish in this paper to parade a catalogue of such activities; they are plainly set forth in our reports.

But a few observations here, in regard to some of our activities may not be out of place. Regarding famine or flood relief operations I must confess, that our funds and enthusiasm for service have greatly suffered owing to the recent development of the so-called "Central" funds. Having regard to the very nature of their appeals and the courteous acquiescence of many old and well-established relief organisations out of a feeling of respect and regard for unity, the public contributed largely and freely to these centralised funds in the hope and belief that they would be adequately available for other organisations. The funds thus remained in the hands of the "Central" Committee and were used up or held up at its discretion; and though representatives of the other organisations were elected to the central body, their voice was necessarily feeble.

If central funds are to be started in the name of other organisations which have previous experience of the work, the central committee which must be duly representative, should be a *mere distributing agent*, allocating adequate funds to the various bonafide organisations, according to the extent and nature of their work. - But if the central organisation starts similar work on its own account, with the money which is so obtained, the work of the other organisations very greatly suffers, and their activities are paralysed. It is therefore much better to allow full and free scope to the efforts of self-governing, well-established organisations in raising funds and utilising them, than to chain them to a powerful central body. It is seldom that the different organisations work in the same area or aid the same families with the same kind of help; so the bogey of over-lapping of relief is generally imaginary.

It may however ensure better efficiency of work and prevent possible abuse of funds, if all the relief organisations, be

they old or new, are duly registered by a central Inspecting Board, constituted of representative men, whose duty would be to see that regular accounts and reports are kept and submitted to the Board and the public money properly utilised. This Central Board may be useful in standardising relief so far as it is possible, may secure travelling facilities and procure goods for all at a favourable rate ; and may help their work in many other ways. Such a system would not hurt the self-respect of any organisation ; it would cure much laxity and looseness ; it will ensure discipline and training ; and it will satisfy the public which pays. And such a Central Board should also see that the amount of surplus that would lie to the credit of each organisation be published at the end of a relief operation. There can be no shame if such surplus be large owing to exercise of strict economy and sparing use of public money ; for, such surplus would be again available for future occasions. It is to be of course assured that these relief organisations have each a permanent committee and their accounts are duly audited ; and also that the public who pays for the relief of a particular distress at a particular place would not object to the use of the surplus elsewhere at another time, to be determined by the committee of the organisation, in response to public demand and after due local investigation.

Another point in this connection is that the principle behind our relief operations should be that of just helping one, who is struck down, to stand on one's legs and rendering only such help as would not impair one's self-respect and spirit of self-help. If we do more we may not only do one an indirect disservice but may be using the funds at the expense of others who may be in greater need of just that help elsewhere or in the future. And in this unfortunate country, such occurrences are now far from being few or far between. This principle also applies to the inadvisability of continuance of relief operations longer than is absolutely necessary ; for, these funds are supplied by the public for the speedy relief of sudden and acute distress.

It is generally desirable, wherever and whenever possible, to carry on the relief operations through local agencies under the guidance of and in association with the particular main organisation. Such procedure helps to draw the best out of the local people and establishes a deep and cordial relationship with a number of noble-hearted local workers ; it utilises the energy of the local people and encourages spirit of self-help and self-sacrifice. It also saves the expenditure (travelling, etc.) on outside workers and it helps us to get much better knowledge of local wants. It brings about a more permanent relationship with the moffusil— which is so very necessary for further organised and constructive work of social service in more important matters.

If a band of us just go and give relief and come away, it becomes an unproductive act. Because such a help like "showers from a drift of clouds may help to fill a pit for a while but the water is not of the land and dries up too soon and leaves the pit as dry and hollow as before ; but the water that is of the deep well, fed by the spring from the deep bosom of the soil, remains as a permanent supply for quenching the thirst of man, beast and lands for ever."

My *last* point in this connection is that we should take the fullest advantage of a relief operation by having it followed by some constructive work for local social welfare. The occasion is most opportune. We come to know and love the people, and they reciprocate our love perhaps in a fuller measure with a mixture of grateful feelings.

We now feel that the people should be given an up-to-date knowledge of agriculture to make them alive to the immediate importance of improving the immense agricultural prospects of the land and drawing upon its unlimited possibilities. We have in the meantime engaged the services of an agricultural expert and enthusiast to travel from district to district, demonstrating by means of lantern lectures and specimen of plants the most advantageous ways of applying modern scientific and intensive methods to get the most profitable out-turn of crops at a cost which is within one's easy means. We have further

made out estimates and plans of productive agricultural schemes, and supplied them to schools and colleges on request with suggestions as to how their schools could be made partially self-supporting by engaging the teachers and students in an agricultural farm, which would at the sametime be a healthy source of recreation and physical exercise to them.

In the matter of small industries and technical education, our Industrial School in Calcutta has been a success. Tailoring is the main and important vocation that is being taught here.

Like agriculture there is an immense field for educating the public in the most profitable home industries, whereby the problem of unemployment and poverty could be largely solved and inadequate income supplemented. With considerable pains we have photographed and made slides of sericultural processes, of different kinds of silk, jute and cotton weaving and various kinds of improvements in small cottage industries ; and are demonstrating all these to the men and women of the rural and urban areas.

Special stress must be laid on popular sanitary education, so that ignorant minds of men, women and children may be enlightened with some knowledge of the laws of health, of proper diet, of the need of exercise, of the nature and prevention of infection, of the value of cleanliness of mind, body and surroundings. Such lectures have often directly led to the arrest of epidemics and thereby to the saving of hundreds of lives.

There is however a large scope for the establishment of dispensaries for the saving of lives from such scourges as Malaria, Kala-azar, Cholera, Dysentery, etc. This has always been an important item in the programme of our branch-centres which are supplied with medicines whenever they can open such a dispensing centre. Immense good work is being done along this line by the Central Anti-malarial Society's treatment-centres and those of the Bengal Health Association, whose examples should inspire the District Boards and Municipal Charitable Dispensaries to put forth more and better efforts in the same line, for, it is after all their work.

Friends, the infinitesimal fraction of work that has so far been attempted or done, serves to make us realise the immensity of the work that lies before us, a task the accomplishment of which lies within our own powers. Yes, within our own powers, if we are earnest enough to use them. That is our point. I am one of those who stubbornly refuse to believe in the theory of "wait till we get Swaraj, then. . . ." I decline to be one of such "wait"-ers. I would rather put it the other way. Do it now, utilise the present to its fullest; and, as day follows night, Swaraj will automatically come. I would venture to go even a step further and say that Swaraj is not a thing to "come;" it is in the "स"; it is within us; we have only to practise and develop it—as we develop the strength that lies latent in us by exercise. Organised acts of Social Service will be so many bricks and stones of which the edifice of Swaraj will be built. For, Social Service covers every kind of activity that goes towards the betterment of our civic life. It urges us above all and first of all, to be men of good and upright character—for without character as foundation, all that we build up becomes shaky and unsound. Let us not forget this fact, and let us not make it a mere lip-maxim. Character implies honesty, straight and square dealing, and an integrity and earnestness of purpose; it would mean a strength of mind that can easily resist the temptation of indulging in exaggeration or undeserved and undue approbation. It urges us to be men of deep faith in Providence: otherwise, what else can sustain and strengthen us in the face of difficulties, disappointments and despair; of misrepresentation, misunderstanding and mistrust; of apathy, antipathy or even opposition; of unkindness or jealousy; when our energy flags or our strength fails, what else can fill our minds with hope and cheer, lift the clouds that darken the mind and lighten the burden that bends our backs; what else can stir us with energy and enthusiasm than a cheering look, or a touch from Him whose love is so soul-filling, whose mercy so infinite and whose presence within is so sustaining and comforting? This deep faith must

be a social worker's essential quality. And in as much as the service of man is the true service of God, social service is religion—it is direct and practical religion. It is the fundamental tenet, common to all faiths. The Geeta says:

“ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रतः ।”

We find in the Mahabharata :

“सर्वेषां यः सुहृदित्यं सर्वेषां द्विते रतः ।  
कर्मणा मनसा वाचा स धर्मं वेद जालते ॥”

One cannot serve if one is proud of one's social position or educational attainments. A sincere realisation of and faith in the God in man must actuate the thoughts and feelings of a true social worker. To him no one can be untouchable by reason of birth or religion : that would be amounting to denying God in the untouchable. He must allow the fullest freedom to men and women for their growth and all-round development ; nay, he should do his best, honestly and sincerely, to remove by every means in his power such disabilities, be they religious, social, sanitary, educational or economic, as stand in the way of the self-manifestation and self-realisation of his brothers and sisters, whatever may be their colour, creed or birth, as he would wish them to have been removed in his own case.

Then, there remains the vast field of Social Service, where every act rightly done and consolidated would automatically, even without our being conscious of it, lay the strong foundation and build up the fabric of Swaraj. We must rear it with the bricks of deeds, with the mortar of judgment and on the broad and deep foundation of Character and Faith. We shall fear no adverse wind ; it will only strengthen our mortar. Difficulties are the best incentive to action, and struggle the best tonic. Like the boulders on the bed of the rocky and uneven stream, difficulties and obstacles should lend force and life and beauty to the current of our activities.

We would appeal to our countrymen to organise just now and utilise every ounce of our energy and resources to the service of our motherland. If we could but harness the 'Niagra' of our patriotic passion and fervour to nation-build-

ing operations from the bottom,—operations which may look ugly and unattractive now and elicit little public cheers to-day, as all foundation-digging must do,—we could be sure of the "beautiful mansion" of the future. Is that so very difficult to achieve, even in our present situation? The alien scab, which in the far-reaching wisdom of the Providence may have been a protective and unifying crust, and of which we have been complaining so much, would naturally fall off as soon as our sores heal up; impatient and premature picking at the crust will only lead to futile pain and bleeding and delay the healing. Let us purify our blood; gain strength; do our bit to help ourselves, and God will help us. Why should we be always looking up to the Government? Is not the field vast enough for our life time? Why should we care as to who holds the reins of Government? Could we not be spiritually and mentally Swarajist first; and direct our eyes and activities within? If the Government cannot or do not pull through a scheme of elementary mass education for the whole province, involving, say, a crore of rupees, on the ground of paucity of funds, can we not see to it ourselves by covering the country with 'pathsalas' for boys and girls through our own organisation and local centres at a such small cost as each of such centre can easily raise; so that in the course of 2 or 3 years, if we all strive together at one and the same time, the appalling percentage of illiteracy of 95 per cent would assuredly fall by at least 50 per cent? It needs only the WILL-TO-DO. It lies within us to tap the moral and economic resources of the zeminders and landlords and secure their most valuable co-operation for the solution of the many agricultural, economic, sanitary and various other problems of their estates—as we see them being tackled in zemindaries where the spirit of social service prevails; it lies with us to so disseminate popular knowledge of Hygiene and Sanitation as would help us to maintain cleanliness of our bodies, surroundings, habits and food as well as of our thoughts; it lies within our power to inspire such confidence in others as will help our co-operative movements and joint-stock companies to achieve

real success and thereby gain immense economic strength ; it lies with us to so reduce extravagances in expenditure on our food and in our feasts, on our dresses and in our living as to make life simpler, nobler and thereby stronger ; it lies with us so to educate our women as to make them helpful consorts in our life and endeavours ; it lies with us so to stretch our hand of fellowship and love to the depressed classes as to convert them into a powerful engine of progress in our onward march ; it lies with us to realise the dignity of manual labour and so to take to agriculture and industry as to lift the dead-weight of poverty that has been weighing us down and paralysing us ; it lies with us to be so tolerant of others' faiths and practices, as to expunge the word "communal" and firmly establish a national brotherhood, based on feelings of toleration, love and respect.

There are hundreds of such other things which we can and must accomplish with our own efforts, stirred and stimulated by difficulties without directing all our energies and resources in the securing of mere "rights" and privileges. We are not doing what we ought to do. Can we say we are really "doing" and "deserve"?

We are said to be a "dying race;" we were a dying race or else a vast continent like ours could not have so easily come under an alien yoke. As a vacuum invites a storm, so the vacuity of our moral, social, economic, intellectual and physical lives necessarily invited the foreign invasion. In other words, Providence in His wisdom added this foreign 'reagent' to bring about such reaction as would 'precipitate' the compounds needed for national regeneration. If His foreign hammer has been a blow, it has at the same time been helping us to be welded into a new national organisation such as had never been before.

Hundreds of our sisters, that are of the "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh," are practically forced into paths of shame and degradation simply because society bangs its door upon them even if they be innocent or keen on going straight. Neither does it provide any Home where they could be housed

and educated to become useful members of society. How many Rescue Homes are there in the country?

Have we been so educating our girls—spiritually, morally, physically, intellectually and socially, as to give them the necessary scope for that development and growth as would make them mothers of stronger and better children, helpful consorts, and useful members of society, so that there will be no need to found "Abala"—ashrams to "protect" them from insults and assaults? It is freedom shielded with proper education and inspired with a noble outlook of life that strengthens character and develops powers of resistance.

Having thus indicated a few lines along which we can work for our social welfare, I shall now place before you a *practical and popular educational scheme for your consideration.*

Let us take the numerous 'melas' and festivities—our religious and socio-religious gatherings where hundreds and thousands of our people congregate. Would it be too much of a dream if we were to take the fullest advantage of these gatherings through Social Service Travelling Camps? Thousands of men, women and children assemble there with their minds focussed on seeing and learning and receiving impressions. Let some of our best-educated and cultured young men, with the urge of ideals and imagination combined with tact and business abilities, organise a travelling camp with a band of workers consisting of (a) a qualified doctor and his assistants, including nurse and midwife ; (b) a band of good singers of hymns and 'kirtans,' (c) lecturers and demonstrators and (d) a few extra hands, if necessary, e.g., a photographer, a book-seller, a hawker of goods, etc. The equipment will consist of a big tent, a cinema apparatus with a number of entertaining, instructive and inspiring films, a magic lantern with sets of educational slides, numerous charts and models ; instruments of 'kirtan' and music, a small dispensary and surgery, a book-stall, a medicine-store, a photographic studio and so on. The arrival of the camp should be widely advertised in the district

beforehand to excite public interest and enlist local co-operation. It would be a case of carrying the *city* right into the heart of the *village*.

I. In the morning the doctor and the nurse with the assistants would be attending to the outdoor patients, the midwife would be giving lectures and demonstrations to women on Maternity and Child Welfare; and the camp would try its best to work in co-operation with the local doctors, qualified or unqualified, and help them in their local work and pass on to them the knowledge of the latest ideas and methods of treatment. Vaccination should form a feature of the medical work.

II. The day time, after breakfast, would be spent (a) in explaining the charts that will fill the walls of the camp or of any additional fixtures, (b) in various useful demonstrations, such as of Home Hygiene and Village Sanitation, of better agricultural methods, of some of the small Home Industries, and (c) in prize-competition of Charka-Spinning, and other useful arts, of which due notice should be given in the advertisement beforehand.

III. The evenings would be devoted to the singing of patriotic songs and devotional hymns and 'sankirtans' to spiritualise the whole movement and to evoke the best and highest feelings in the audience, as nothing is so moving as good music.

IV. Lastly, at night there would be lantern lectures, selected cinema shows, and even, if possible, some simple theatrical performance of pieces specially prepared for the purpose on such subjects, as will inculcate pure and high ideals in the villagers' mind.

Instructive and artistically illustrated leaflets might be sold or distributed, which the villagers would *cherish* on walls of their houses. Sports may be organised and prizes awarded and promised for the following year to stimulate physical exercise and open-air games; and in the cases of women, to encourage arts and crafts.

The earnings at the camps—from the cinema shows and theatrical performances, by the sale of medicines and books,

photographs and pictures (which should include those of great men and sacred and interesting places) and by other suitable means,—should cover the expenses of the organisation, leaving a margin of profit for further improvement of the scheme.

The beneficent value of such a Travelling Camp would be simply incalculable and its possibilities immense. It should be travelling throughout the year and should visit suitable rural areas. Even when there be no melas—the camp would create a 'Mela.'

When such a camp would leave a place, it would have the satisfaction of feeling that it had been able to stir and stimulate the minds of men and women and children towards a better corporate life, had given them some taste of pure entertainment and culture, relieved some amount of suffering, and sown some seeds of knowledge and aspiration as would be sure to bear fruit at some future date. And I feel no doubt whatever, that if this practical scheme of Popular Travelling University pregnant with such immense possibilities, be given effect to, the civic conscience of the people would be awakened to a very great extent and a strong, beneficent relationship will be established between the towns and villages ; and a definite advancement in the forward march of the people assured.

Wanted now the worker, the organiser, the man of Faith and Vision, the man of Culture and Love, the man who would dedicate his life to the cause ; and inspire his followers and co-workers with the spirit of his devotion and self-sacrifice.

Gentl men, I think, I have said enough ; I must now conclude with a few final observations.

"Great men and great events" as I had said on another occasion, "are alike the Creation (i.e. expression) and the creators of an age. They come charged with the silent message of the feelings of generations past and deliver that message, with a power and force that constitute their greatness, to generations of the future."

Such has indeed been the message of the great mission which bears the hallowed name of Sri Ramakrishna Deva and

of that great seer and prophet Swami Vivekananda. All Leagues and associations that have followed do in like manner serve in a humble way, the needs of the times ; or else they would not have seen the light of day. In free countries the Government is, as it were, a self-evolved and natural elevation of the land—its 'part and parcel' ; and as such, lords it over the surroundings. Whereas, when the Government is alien, it may, like a huge piece of rock, prove to be a crusing dead-weight, because of the want of an organic continuity of "nerves, vessels and fibers" which carry and interpret impulses. It is just here that these Missions and Leagues are needed to bridge the gulf between the Government and the people ; and through their mission of disinterested service, can interpret the needs of the people to the Government, the District Boards and the Municipalities ; and, at the same time can get the most and the best out of the latter for the benefit of the people, whose wants they have studied first-hand and with which they have been more directly acquainted. Secondly, the programme of social service should be wide enough to include all kinds of endeavour which go towards an all-round betterment of life and a fuller self-realisation and self-determination. Thirdly, social service presents the only wide platform on which men and women of different shades of opinions can freely meet and co-operate, for such service is worship of the Divine through love and sympathy for our fellow-beings. Fourthly, the programme of social service cannot be kept confined to any particular act of benevolence. The problems of religious, educational, economic, sanitary and social welfare, particularly in this country, are so intimately inter-related, like the organs of our body, that one can not exclusively attend to one aspect without ignoring and denying the organic relationship of others. And lastly, though there can be no force that could be so dynamic, so infective, so inspiring and so stimulating as the intense dedication of a life to the furtherance of a cause, yet it is possible for many people, in the midst of such avocations of life as God in His creative design has placed them in, to feel the irresistible divine urge and impulse within,

and dedicate some part of their time and resources to the service of man. It is easily possible to do so if we dye our thoughts and activities in that 'Colour Divine', and if we set the many strings of our life of many notes to the 'Tune Eternal.' If thus each and every one of us do something more or less, in our own way, contribute some colour or some thread to the weaving of any pattern of social welfare, and not wait till we can do the whole which is neither possible nor always desirable having regard to the many proper interests and trusts which Life has imposed upon us as ordained by God, if we do not underrate our capacities for service, and if we do not make too much of our limitations and handicaps which can be greatly conquered by the mind that wills to do, we can easily achieve an amount of success and progress as will be of ever-lasting good to our country.

Let us pray for the necessary hope and strength and with "Heart within and God over head" set ourselves to do something from now and to-day. May God help us.

### VILLAGE ORGANISATION.

By DR. S. L. SARKAR.

In studying the subject of organisation we get many a valuable suggestion from the creation of the world and evolution of mankind. In creating the world God has given Himself up and His joy lies in it. This joy in creation, through sacrifice, He has imparted to all those who want to build or create. The painter, the sculptor, the poet, the philosopher, the scientist, the monk and the householder—all find delight in their respective creations and creations connote sacrifice on the part of the person concerned. The more rigorous the sacrifice, the greater the joy, and the greater the joy in the

sacrifice, the happier the result. Thus self-sacrifice must be the basis on which the real work of village organisation should rest.

We find there are two types of work ; work impelled by a mere sense of obligation and work inspired by love. Of the two the latter is more effective and produces real joy. The Ramakrishna Mission has shown good example of the latter kind of work inspired as it is by its noble motto "For the liberation of the self and for the good of the many." Here "the service to others" becomes identified with "service to one's own self." It is not merely giving but it is both giving and taking. That self-sacrifice for the good of the world paves the way for one's own salvation has been demonstrated by the Mission. If this sacrifice gives one joy instead of making one unhappy and miserable then only real good to the world is possible. In doing an act of service, one must not be actuated by a sense of obligation alone, but one should be stimulated by a spirit of love and self-sacrifice. 'Moksha' is the experience of joy derived from the hardship of sacrifice. What else can be the meaning of Moksha?

I have given above the philosophy of service. It is the idea of Ananda (joy) which impels a man to sacrifice all his comforts for the sake of others. But the path of a social worker is not strewn with roses. It is more often than not that he is confronted with difficulties and obstacles. He must have the courage to fight single-handed against the whole world. When Arjuna was fighting for the establishment of righteousness on earth he was assailed with various doubts which were put an end to by the following words of Sri Krishna :—

क्षेयं मा स्त गमः पार्थं नैतस्वयुपपद्यते ।

नुहं हृदयदोर्बल्यं व्यक्तोन्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥

This sloka gives in short the whole message of the Bhagavad Gita. Shake off your cowardice, march on, take courage and let not success or failure affect you. Nature also preaches the same message of fearlessness. Fearlessness is the condition

for the development of moral virtues. There are difficulties in the performance of any constructive work. But however great the obstacles may be, there is none too great to be surmounted by an indomitable will. Our customs, habits, inclinations and even the laws of the land may stand in the path of progress but before a strong and persistent will everything is bound to give way. The laudatory attempts made by many of our selfless young men and well-wishers of the country give indications that mighty results will come in due course of time. A cursory glance at what is going on in the world of science should convince us of the necessity of one's being very energetic and alert also with regard to the work of reorganisation in villages.

The problem of Malaria can be effectively solved if the villagers make a united and persistent effort in that direction. Money is no doubt necessary for the work, but courage, strength and initiative are things even more necessary. The permission of the landlord must first be obtained. But unfortunately in most cases the landlord minds his rights but rarely his duties. He does not in the least care for the welfare of the villagers. He is unmindful of the malaria since it does not affect him in the town to which he has removed. He does not trouble himself about the sanitation of the village. The disease, or the death of his tenants does not disturb his peace ; nay, sometimes he finds the latter even to his benefit—for if one tenant dies he can transfer his piece of land to another for a larger rent. Even such a landlord can be brought round to co-operate with the people by earnest and persistent work.

The villages are greatly wanting in hygienic and sanitary arrangements, and the directions in which the villagers can turn their minds are many. The village may have several small ponds and one big tank. Ponds may be dirty for want of cleansing ; but if one wants to fill them up the owners will protest, neither will they clean them themselves. The big tank usually is the joint property of a few families of whom some have removed to the town and so may not have any

interest in reclaiming it. Nor will they easily give permission to have this done. Even the clothes of Cholera patients are sometimes washed there, but the one or more proprietors of the tank that still live in the village are not in a position to check this abuse. From the same tank others will take their drinking water, that being the only source of such supply. This would contribute to the spread of Cholera. The villagers should themselves take the initiative to mend such matters.

Due to the absence of proper drainage, the dirty water stagnates, emits obnoxious gases and provides a good breeding ground for mosquito larvae. Those who want to live must fight out Malaria. Good drains should be constructed, and insanitary ponds and tanks must be filled up or cleaned. The first thing necessary, as I have already said, is the permission of the landlord, which is often hard to get. But to go by the letter of the law and die like cowards will not do. How the rights of a tenant are ignored! Even to fell a tree or build a brick-house he requires the sanction of the landlord. Sometimes he has to buy the landlord's consent with a good present even in case of his children's marriage.

In the estate of Rajah Bahadur of Chanchol in the District of Maldah, there was a *beel* covering a mile or more. When the estate was under the Court of Wards the dam of the *beel* was removed. The water drained out and the land was distributed amongst the tenants. The estate earned something thereby no doubt, but this led to much suffering on the part of the tenants, as the rain-water flooded the lands and damaged the crops. When the water receded leaving the lands dry, the crops again suffered. The tenants came forward and on their own responsibility rebuilt the dam. As a result a nice lake was formed covering over a square mile; the lands near the lake gained in moisture and fertility and from the lake too there was a good income from the rearing of fish.

Regular flushing with alluvium-bearing water from the overflowing of rivers is a good preventive against malaria. If by building dams such floods are checked, the fields cannot receive their share of silt deposit nor the tanks and *dobahs*

in them can be washed clean. In the district of Maldah an area of 30 to 40 miles was washed every year by the floods in the Bhagirathi and there was no malaria then. The zemindars would not allow such a vast plot of land to remain waste. Hence they built a dam to secure it from the floods and distributed it amongst the tenants. The result was that in the villages near the dam malaria increased to such an extent that 81 per cent. of the villagers were affected with splenic enlargement whereas those in the neighbourhood of the flushed area were almost free, the percentage affected being only 18. Petitions were forwarded to the Government, but they wasted time in making schemes and resolutions without taking any active measures. At last the tenants having no other way, one night made an opening in the dam itself. This did not cause much damage ; only a few acres of cultivated lands were submerged and some mango groves were affected. Nevertheless the tenants were saved from the dire disease ; besides, the tanks within the area were filled with fresh water and many plots of land increased in fertility and value, by the deposit of silt from flood water.

In the same district there is another dam called Dwarbasini obstructing the floods ; while the tenants are suffering severely from the disease, the Government and the District Board are coolly deliberating over schemes and projects. No active step has yet been taken. As in the case of Lohagara dam previously mentioned, here also, the problem will be easily solved, if the tenants take the matter into their own hands.

The railway lines in many cases by preventing the free flow of water have contributed to the spread of malaria. Near the town of Old Maldah of the Muhammedan times there is a canal called Behular Khal by which the river water used to flow during the rainy season and wash all sides of the town. But when the Railway Company built the lines they instead of constructing a bridge over the canal filled it up at the place of crossing, to build a bridge being considered too expensive. In the absence of the flow of water and the periodic washing of the town, malaria increased in the locality. Petitions and

applications were submitted to the Government for full twenty years without any effect. During a heavy flood the Railway Company noticed that the people were trying to open an outlet for the flood water, by cutting the railway line stealthily. This roused their compassion and they cleared the canal by building a bridge over it. This cost them only a paltry sum of Rs. 18,000. When the tenants can achieve by united efforts such great results, or at least succeed in attracting the attention of the Government, every villager should work at least for the improvement of his village ; this is the sure road to peace and prosperity.

Those who have not lived in villages cannot have any idea of their deplorable condition. I know a respectable village. There was a deep ditch on the outskirts of that village, and there were rows of latrines made of sticks and poles by its side. Every family built a latrine with screens, mats and bushes in that part of the ditch which was nearest to his house. The night soil accumulated there for many years. Once a pole gave way and two young ladies fell into that dirt. They were, however, rescued with great difficulty. At another time an old lady fell into the ditch in the same way and a stick piercing the stomach caused her death. At nights, for fear of snakes and wild boars, villagers ease themselves at the back of the house and sometimes even on the roofs if it is a brick-built house and the dirt accumulates there. In spite of all this the village women are very punctilious about the rules of cleanliness !

The condition of the men is worse still. The old buildings of the zemindar family are usually in a dilapidated condition. Peepul and banyan trees grow freely on the roof. The earning and the educated members of the family desert the village and the poorer people somehow eke out a living and are plunged in family litigation. The descendants of these families though in a deplorable condition are usually infatuated with family pride and are over-bearing in their treatment with others. They are indolent and hardly evince any enthusiasm

to regain their old status. Satisfied with a petty income from a few tenants they waste their time in playing chess, in malicious gossip and in lording it over their household. They suffer from malaria but are not able to get the necessary diet and medicine owing to their poverty and idleness. They drudge on from day to day with enlarged spleens and sickly wives and children. Those who are a little better as regards finances spend a lot of money on marriages and festivals. The hiring of dancing girls has become an important item in the Durga Puja Festival. While describing a scene on the day of immersion of the image a humorist said, "Except the image of the Divine Mother all others drank themselves drunk." The men of the village waste their time by playing cards and indulging in scandals till noon while the women go out to the neighbouring jungles to collect fuel. I know of families where the men do not help the women even in splitting wood, but get annoyed if the meal is a little late. They slander women. Self-reliance in a woman, is considered by them as a vice. The mud-walls of the house of a widow were badly damaged and the earth was falling therefrom. This poor lady belonged to a zemindar's family and had only a minor son. Having none to help her, she went herself with a basket and a shovel, and carried earth from the river and mended the walls. This simple act of self-reliance was resented by the village idlers, and they abused her in no decent language!

In the malarial season, sometimes whole families are laid up with the fell disease, having none to look after the patients. One cannot describe adequately the woes and sufferings of these families. Fortunately the fever remains only for a few hours after which the patients can generally move about and even take their usual meals. The son may bring from the market some fish and vegetables ; the mother coming out of her sick bed in the brief respite, the fever might have allowed her, may cook them for her son ; by the time she finishes cooking she sees him shivering down on the bed with the fever. The mother would wail that her starving son was not able to take the food which she has prepared. Such stories

are by no means rare. I may again cite a case of a village in the district of Pabna. It was a very prosperous village once but now it shares the same fate with the other villages of Bengal. It was situated some five miles away from Pabna on the banks of the river Ichhamati. In that village a young man once shot at a wild boar. The wounded boar somehow escaped and was lost sight of. A few days later the whole village was affected with a stinking and obnoxious smell. It was found that the smell was coming from within a bush under a tree. The men of the village did not care to examine the cause of this public nuisance but would escape from the nasty smell by resorting to the river-side where the smell was not so strong, coming to the village only for their meals. It became unbearable to the women who were confined to their houses ; some of them were laid up in bed on account of the nasty smell ; one suffered so much that she had to leave for another part of the village and it was the womenfolk who finally took the matter in their hands. They found that the bad smell was due to the rotting carcase of the boar, collected some kerosine oil and fuel from each house of the village and set the decaying body on fire. Thus the funeral was over. Of course, the male members of the village attended the affair with long sticks in their hands.

One thing is worth our attention in connection with village life and that is the more practical part played by the women in comparison with the men. It is the women who generally carry on all the duties of the household and in some cases besides managing all domestic affairs in an incredibly economical way, often depending merely on their own exertion by devoting a few hours to handicraft ; they manage even their small estates, making small collections in kind or coin and rear up the children independently. To be fair, it must be admitted that it is the lady-guardians again, who have a peculiar standard of morality of their own which is largely responsible for the mischievous and sometimes dangerous tendencies imbibed by their pet wards. To train the child to steal things belonging to other persons and thus sow the seeds of dissension among

co-sharers, to show undue affection by way of allowing the children to take prohibited diet even in cases of illness and especially on invitations and to teach to disregard the ordinary laws of health and fall a prey to malaria all the year round —these are matters of common experience in our villages. Though we appreciate the artless, unoffending sincerity of our village-folk, and do not want to be blind to the good side of village life, such as its being free from heartless etiquette and formalities that are rife in our cities and towns, we should not at the same time shut our eyes against the cruelties born of rank prejudices in the peculiar atmosphere of the village practised by the women even now. In one case one woman lost her life owing to illness, because she had been by her legal guardians compelled in the name of the Shastras to free herself from all impurities by a prolonged bath every day diving herself deep in the tank water. The methods of purifying oneself by bathing vary in different places.

Then there are other superstitions, long-standing and often very cruel, the most conspicuous being those regarding the "don't-touchisms" of the lying-in-room. If that room catches fire, even then people do not show any eagerness to put it out. Widows for the sake of their *religion* never do anything in connection with it. So the male members sometimes act as nurses there. A widow said, "We cannot act as Christians do. Shall a widow forego all the merits of her pilgrimages and spiritual practices by entering the lying-in-room? What penances had she not to undergo in order to gain this merit? Shall she spoil the whole thing etc. etc." Once a lady delivered of a son after devotional worship to the Lord extending over thirty years was denied a shelter by all people even when the lying-in-room was made uninhabitable owing to a severe hail-storm attended with a heavy downpour of rain. Hailstones had not spared the interstices of the straw roof of that room. The matter ended most unfortunately. The mother protected the child hugging it to her bosom as long as possible but at last it died. These superstitions with regard to the lying-in-room are now dying out, but it is not uncommon

even in these days to leave the sick to his or her fate and cite the old text, "What will happen will happen. The patient must live if so destined!"

This is not however a complete picture of village life. There are other aspects which deserve our attention. We must emphasise that our mothers and sisters—the women-folk of the villages, must first be properly trained—a new direction must be given to their thought-currents, if any good work of village re-organisation is to be done in right earnest. Let not old superstitions spoil their natural simplicity, sincerity and affectionate traits. They must be trained on such national lines that their spirit of self-help may not be handicapped by the strain of the present struggle for existence and that they may extend their sympathy and usefulness from the small hearth to the entire village.

A word on the education of women is relevant here. The regeneration of our national life must come through this race of mothers who exert the greatest influence upon the life of a nation everywhere on earth. The first rudiments of education—education in its real sense—like a big tree drawing all its nourishment from the mother earth—we receive from our mothers. If we believe in its truth, can we remain satisfied by starting only a few Girls' schools here and there without any further activities?

University education, confined to large cities and towns, as it is current in modern India cannot eradicate all the evils our society is contaminated with. It has its use, but it does not go a long way. Our educated women also are not free from the evil influence of this exotic education. There is no culture of the heart—it is only superficial ornamentation; there is no growth. Of the institutions started for the education of Indian women, a few have kept up their connection with the village and justly deserve our notice. Sarojnalini Dutt Mahila Samiti, Bani Bhavan established by the respected Abala Bose, Annapurna Ashram of Benares, Bharat Stri Mahamandal of the late Krishna Bhabini Dasi, Saradeswari Ashram and Sister Nivedita Girls' School are all institutions of the right type started

on national lines, suited to meet the present needs of our country and are attempting also to assimilate the best of Western culture. The economic side also has not been neglected. They make it a point to turn our girls into self-reliant women fit to stand on their own legs and full of the sense of self-respect.

Village organisation is a huge task. Millions, if not crores have to contribute their quota to make it a success. The Ramakrishna Mission is trying its level best to support the Sister Nivedita Girls' School. The ideals of renunciation and service initiated by Sri Ramakrishna and transmitted to His great disciple Swami Vivekananda were in turn literally given to his disciple Sister Nivedita. As the name indicates, she dedicated her life to her Master and laboured hard with all the tenacity of an ascetic to serve our Motherland. The Nivedita Girls' School is the fruit of her life-long labour. She believed that heroic, strong-willed, truthful and self-denying women would be turned out in large numbers by her Institution and those to be started all over the country by the children of the soil. This is a good and hopeful programme, promising to deliver the country from its present troubles. What will happen afterwards has yet to be seen.

Besides education, village organisation work should also include some other important items, e.g. sanitation and moral culture amongst others. It is hard for me to speak with authority on economic development. I cannot pretend to bring that within the purview of this paper. Regarding sanitation a few words might be added here. I cannot speak of malaria, the most important problem in Bengal to-day, as Doctor Gopal Chandra Chattopadhyaya, the worthy Secretary of the Central Malaria and Co-operative Societies, an expert on this subject, is personally attending this Convention. I would, of course, say something on Infant Mortality a subject on which I have made some special study. There is a close connection between Infant Mortality and bad milk, and again between bad milk and the grass eaten by our cattle. Generally Infant Mortality is very high, as I noticed especially at a village in the District of Khulna, if the cattle have to graze

on wet pasture and it is very low if the cattle can graze on fine pastures where *Durb*: (दुर्ब) grass is to be found in plenty. Thus we see that we have to be as careful in having good paddy fields as in keeping good pasturing grounds where all measures should be taken to preserve the grass in a proper condition.

The keeping of a common pasture or a "village common" in connection with village re-organisation has got another bright side. This was noticed by Jan. St. Lewinski, the erudite Russian scholar and Lecturer in the London School of Economics on Village Community. He showed how the fallow lands or pasturing grounds used by all and the jungle tracts wherefrom all people collect their fuel formed a link, a bond of union in the village communities of Russia. Our friend Dr. Gopal Chandra Chatterji has made it compulsory on the part of all the members of his Anti-Malarial Co-operative and Public Health Society to purchase some shares thereof and I fervently hope that the Co-operative Banks established in every village will serve the purpose of the Russian pastures and form a bond of union in our villages. Thus it is obvious that there are so many problems we have to solve in order to improve the condition of our villages. This should especially attract the attention of the educated youth of our country. They should remember what Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore remarked that University education which mainly means taking notes, cramming and passing examinations, is not at present enriching our youth intellectually, because it is devoid of practicality. We turn out idlers who disappoint all including themselves. Our educated youth should turn their attention to such vital problems.

Let us take the case of Malarial mosquitoes. There are many varieties of these mosquitoes. Some stagnant pools in certain villages breed during the rainy season, only one variety of mosquitoes year after year even in spite of the drying up of the pools during summer and subsequent inundations. But it is difficult even for a scientist to ascertain why it is so. Thus many such problems of our village life have yet to be solved.

Our young men may gain a place in the scientific world by taking to many such new untrodden fields as Village Sanitation, Zoology, Biology, Botany and Economics instead of going in for beaten tracks in research work as is evident in modern days.

Here in this Convention of the Ramakrishna Mission I have tried to show only one item of this vast field of village Re-organisation. I have tried to analyse some tendencies of our village people and this is also to point out that the task of giving these a new turn devolves on the Ramakrishna Mission itself. If this Ramakrishna Mission Convention means to settle the future programme of the Mission, I think, Village Re-organisation should occupy a prominent place therein. More particularly, it is the young all-renouncing members of the Ramakrishna Mission who can claim to guide the resolute young men of our country who are ready to brave all the stress and difficulties of modern village life, and do the work of re-organisation. At the inauguration of this Convention, His Holiness Srimat Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj emphasised on bearing in mind the text—"Emancipation of our self and the good of the world" as the principal motto of this Mission. If this is to be realised in deed, the village is its proper sphere of activity. Already village work has commenced, but the more of method, order and attention, undoubtedly the surer and greater the success.\*

## AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENT IN BENGAL.

BY NIRMAL DEV, ESQ.

I have been asked to-day to tell you something about the improvements made in the direction of agriculture and I accept the order of our esteemed President with due respect. But let me remind you gentlemen, at the very outset, that it is well-nigh impossible to speak anything in a comprehensive

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\* Rendered into English from the original in Bengali—“

way on such a vast and difficult subject as the agriculture of this country within the short space of time allotted to me ; and I shall make no such attempt. I shall only briefly relate to you a few of the agricultural improvements brought about by the Agricultural Department of the Government of Bengal, which I as one in the service of the Department have had occasion to study and the extent, to which we can further the cause of agriculture in this country by their adoption and introduction.

There is hardly anybody to question the importance of agriculture in a country, where 250 millions of its people are directly dependent on it alone for the means of their livelihood. But coming to talk on agriculture, those who feel proud of India's proverbial affluence in the past would naturally ask : "Is there any necessity to-day to introduce, after a lapse of so many centuries, any new method of agriculture in place of that which provided sufficient food, clothing and comfortable living to our forefathers?" But if we go deeper into the problem, it will be quite clear, that this objection is entirely groundless. In days gone by, there was a time, when India hardly possessed so many roads and had no railways, steamers or any other quick means of communication or transport which science has now brought into existence. The population too was then less dense than now and the products of one country or locality could find no such easy and quick outlet into another and the necessities of life were also fewer and simpler. But this state of things has now undergone a thorough change ; and not only have the people multiplied in number, but their necessities have also increased. They traverse, with ease and comfort in six hours, from one part of the country to another, which formerly would perhaps have taken six weeks to do. India has now come to be bound in closer relations with the rest of the world and its food and other products are now carried far and wide to the remotest corners of the globe. The widening of the market has resulted in the increased demand for our products which in its turn has caused an enormous rise in the prices. But with the old

method of production we are not able to earn as much as the other nations, and so we are not able to pay as much as the other countries ; the result is that owing to the competition, all our foodstuffs go to foreign lands leaving the poorer among us either to get only a partial meal or to starve. And so it is absolutely essential to increase our earning capacity and all possible efforts should be made to increase the produce of the land.

It is because of this fact that the agricultural department has come to be considered an important part of the machinery of administration in every civilised country, and the ideal aimed at by every government is to increase the yield of the land with the minimum labour and expenditure ; and the agricultural department of the Government of Bengal has also got the same idea in view. This department was brought into existence nearly a quarter of a century ago, and throughout this long period it is working with untiring energy to find ways and means for the development of Agriculture in Bengal. And it is now a well-known fact that this effort has not been wholly fruitless. Paddy, Jute, Sugarcane and Potatoes form the staple crops of Bengal. Experts in the line of agriculture have been doing extensive experiments in the Government experimental farms and have in some cases discovered such improved varieties of these crops as yield much greater than the indigenous ones ; and the farmers in Bengal, can profit themselves by the introduction of such improved varieties of seeds without having to incur any extra expenditure on that account.

Of these seeds, the first is a kind of jute known as *Chinsurah Green*. It is a variety of *Olitorious* jute and can be grown in those parts of Bengal where jute is cultivated on high lands. During the last few years, wherever it has been cultivated, its yield per bigha has been greater than that of the local variety by one maund. And the secret of the increase of the yield is that whereas the country varieties come to bloom within  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 months of their sowing, this improved variety takes 4 to 6 weeks more to attain to maturity. It is known to

everybody that plants cease to grow as soon as they begin to flower ; thus when the country varieties cease to have further growth, the Chinsurah Green variety still goes on developing and thus give a richer yield. Its fibres also become softer and shining and consequently it sells at a higher bid.

There are still two other improved varieties of jute introduced by the agricultural department, viz., Kakeya Bombay and No. 154 Dacca. These belong to capsular variety and are adapted to lowlands. Their yield is richer than that of other lowland varieties by one to two maunds per bigha while there is no difference in the method of their cultivation. On an average about 7,170,000 bighas of land are under jute cultivation every year in the whole of Bengal, and it can thus be easily surmised to what an enormous extent the income derived from the lands could be increased, only if the cultivators would undertake to introduce these improved varieties of jute in place of the old indigenous ones.

As regards paddy, Kataktara, Indrasail and Dudhsai varieties deserve mention. Kataktara is a variety of *Aus* paddy, and is reaped in the month of Aswin, leaving sufficient margin of time to sow any kind of winter crop on the same land. The quality of rice of the Kataktara paddy is fine, white in colour and slightly aromatic. Quantitatively also it yields more profusely and is suitable for those elevated lands where *Aman* paddy cannot be profitably cultivated for want of sufficient water in them after the month of Aswin ; and as I have noted above there is the other and greater advantage of the same plot of land yielding two crops in the year, viz., a fine variety of paddy and some suitable kind of winter crop. Those low-lying paddy fields which are under water up to the month of Kartik are suitable for Indrasail Paddy, and in such lands the output of this improved variety is on an average greater than the local variety by one to two maunds per bigha. Its grams are of medium size, white in colour and give a sweet taste when boiled. This paddy is also suitable for *Khai* and *Muri*. For ordinary low-lying lands Dudhsar paddy is the

best of all. It is a very good bearer and its grains also are medium in size.

For good sugarcane plantation Tanna variety is highly recommended by the agricultural department. This cane grows taller than others and is very thick and juicy ; also it yields a larger quantity of molasses (Gurh) than the indigenous varieties. Its skin is very tough and it is thus quite immune from the depredations of jackals and wild boars. Belonging to a hardy stock this sugarcane can withstand both drought and flood ; and by careful cultivation 55 maunds of Gurh per bigha have been obtained from this variety of sugarcane in the Chinsurah Experimental Farm. Experiments are now going on with another variety of sugarcane brought in from Madras, and the results which have hitherto been obtained indicate that in the near future this sugarcane may come to be regarded as the best of all. But this cannot be said with certainty unless it is experimented upon for several years more and no effort has therefore been made to introduce this variety to the cultivators at large. Besides these principal crops, experiments are being made with various kinds of cotton and fodder crops.

Side by side with these improvements in the crops, we should direct our attention to the breeding and rearing of good and healthy cattle as well, for the want of good milch cows and hardworking bulls is being felt by all. The Government has established a cattle-breeding farm at Rungpur, where bulls from the U. P. and the Punjab characterised by good milking qualities are crossed with native breeds (country cows) so that the calves may develop their milk-yielding power and also be capable of withstanding the climate of Bengal. As a result of these experiments extending over a period of 14 or 15 years, bulls have been produced at the Rungpur farm possessing both these required qualities. It is hoped that extensive adoption of this practice may greatly improve the condition of the cattle of Bengal.

In order to bring these improvements to the notice of the farmers, there are District Agricultural Officers under whom

there are also Agricultural Demonstrators, who give the farmers some opportunity to profit by their advice and guidance.

But we cannot hope to achieve any appreciable improvement and result unless we ourselves wake up to a full consciousness of the gravity of the task and apply our best energies to take advantage of the help freely offered by the Government. It is high time that we shake off our blind conservatism which stands against all progress, and embark upon modern projects armed with the latest scientific appliances, suited to our own conditions. It is now the duty of the educated and patriotic sons of Bengal to establish agricultural associations in every village, to draw the attention of the ignorant cultivators to the improvements worked out at the Government Experimental Farms, and to tell them what the people of other countries have done and are still doing in this direction and thus to advance the cause of agriculture in this country. They should be taught to open their eyes to the fact that human knowledge never was and can never afford to be at a standstill, and like all other branches of knowledge the science of agriculture too, has advanced and is still advancing from day to day and has brought to light such wonderful results which were unknown to mankind before. We should all unite whole-heartedly and devote ourselves to the uplift of our country by adopting unhesitatingly all those new improvements and discoveries which modern science has brought into existence. Then it would be of lasting benefit to our countrymen and then only will this country now downtrodden, weak and famished, again rise up to her full stature, glory and prowess, and be filled with plenty and prosperity. Let us pray to the Almighty that the day may soon dawn.

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## EPIDEMIC DISEASES AND SOCIAL SERVICE

BY

DR. GOPAL CHANDRA CHATTERJI.

You are probably aware, that Sir John Woodroffe, late Judge of the Calcutta High Court, wrote a book called "Is India civilised?" This was written in defence of Hindu civilisation against the unjustifiable and senseless attack on Hindu culture by one Mr. Archer. Sir John in his able defence, stated incidentally, that Hindu religion based as it is on a true conception of life, namely spiritualistic as contrasted with materialistic view of life, is still a living faith, even after the lapse of something like 6 or 10 thousand years from its origin, as computed by different savants—a thing not shared by any other civilisation of the world such as Iranian, Phoenician, Hellenic or Roman all of which have died out after having flourished for a limited period. This Hindu culture has even outlived the independence of the very nation from which it has sprung and has not been extinguished even after 2 thousand years of subjection to foreign nations having cultures opposed in every way to Hindu culture. But this ardent advocate of our culture deplores at one place in his book, that what swords and bayonets of conquerors could not do, Malaria and Phthisis are doing, playing havoc among the Hindus, the torch-bearers of this spiritual light. As you, disciples of that great modern protagonist of Hindu culture, Sree Ramakrishna Deva, have combined in yourself the spiritual culture of Hindus along with social service to humanity, it is meet and proper that your social service should not be blind social service based on faith alone, but should be, in order to be effective, based on the solid bedrock of truth discovered by the deductive sciences of the West. This yearning after truth has made you, no doubt, seek medical men versed in the modern science of medicine for giving you an idea of the essential truths of preventive medicines, the western followers of which, though not belonging to any religious order, can however take their place among the front rank

of the best social workers. Who will deny this honoured place to a Pasteur, Robert Koch or a Jenner, or the lesser shining lights of the order, namely Ronald Ross or Col. Gorgas, men whose discoveries or method of application of the discoveries to the people at large, have benefited humanity much more than any munificence of a Carnegie? Mr. Rockfeller, the iron King of U. S. A. spent a huge sum out of his fortune through the International Institute of Preventive Medicine created from his gift yielding a yearly income of about 9 crores of rupees. He thought this method of spending money as superior to that of paying money in the shape of alms to the suffering humanity.

Now, to come to the subject of my paper. As you are not versed in the technical language of medical science, this paper of mine dealing with a technical subject is not likely to be intelligible. So, I will begin my subject with a little generalisation for which I hope to be excused.

In this world of ours all things which meet our eyes are classed as living and non-living things. The living things are again divided as belonging to the vegetable and the animal kingdoms. These living things can again be divided, for our purposes, into living things visible to the naked eye, and living things not visible to the naked eye, but detectable through the microscope which for the sake of convenience we call the living microscopic world. Actions baneful or beneficial of the visible living beings on human beings are palpable enough. Rice and wheat which sustain us belong to the vegetable kingdom. Aconite, Nuxvomica and Belladonna also of vegetable origin are poisonous to human beings. Cattle and horses which render service to human beings are of animal origin, while tigers and snakes also of animal origin cause positive disservice to human beings. These we know. But people think that they have got very very little to do with the unseen microscopic world. If there be any, they say it need not be taken into account as it does not come within their purview. But a little reflection will show that the unseen world has got as much influence in shaping the destiny of the human race

as the visible world. It comes prominently before our mind's eye when epidemics like Cholera or Plague break out and take away millions of human lives. The Malaria parasite alone has destroyed the civilisation of Rome and Greece, and has been instrumental in shaping the destiny of many a nation, including ours. On the side of the economy of nature, one example will show how the very existence of the visible living world essentially depends on the microscopic world. Putrefaction of dead bodies of animals dissolving out their higher constituents, such as muscles, bone and skin, into lower compounds as water, Sulphuretted Hydrogen, Ammonia etc. is exclusively done by the unseen microscopic world. These lower compounds are assimilated for use by the plants in building their structures which otherwise would not have got any nutrition. Besides, if these putrefactive processes, dissolving out organs of the dead animals, did not take place, the world would have been covered with the dead bodies of animals. The jackals and the vultures, their number being too small for the purpose, can by no means compete with the nature's scavengers in their work. Incidentally, I may mention that the species belonging to the living microscopic world, not to speak of their number, exceed greatly the number of those of the living beings of the visible world (vegetable and animal) and have besides objects, which are so very beautiful as to fill our heart with an adoration for the Great Designer of this world. Which living things visible to the naked eye can compare with an Euglena, gambolling about in bright sunshine in our pond water or a volvox in its glittering colours also present in myriads in our tank water? Those who have seen them under the microscope and have seen the beauty and appreciated the arrangement of the mechanism of the internal organs of the organisms cannot but say that they have seen nothing so beautiful in nature. Who can explain why these beautiful things of nature have been kept away so long from being seen by mortal eyes, until modern science revealed their existence? But along with these beautiful things, whose existence ordinary people cannot dream of, there are other living things belonging

to the microscopic world, the presence of which though no one can make out by ordinary eye, are present in our surroundings and which show themselves by the terrible effects on the human race when men die of Plague or Cholera.

Our ancestors guessed their presence by inductive reasoning without actually seeing them, as much as a modern astronomer guesses by inductive reasoning the presence of a dark star associated with a luminous one, in the binary stars, by the effect of the dark star on the luminous one without actually seeing it. The cleanly personal habits ingrained on us by our Sastras—cleaning the body by daily bath in running streams—cleansing the mouth in the early morning, the prohibition of urinating or passing stool in the water meant for drinking and washing, have their origin in this inductive reasoning ; we see this injunction being carried out even now. Now-a-days the microscopic organisms producing these devastating diseases are being studied with closest possible care, by scientific men, for differentiating them from the thousands of absolutely harmless organisms such as those producing curdled milk as well as those taking part in the economy of nature acting as nature's scavengers. Every such organism has got its own peculiarity, as much as a cow or a goat has its own. It is no use mentioning the distinguishing points of these disease-producing organisms here in detail. It will suffice if I say only those points which are necessary for the prevention of epidemic diseases which we have to deal with in this country, as for example, Cholera, Malaria, Kala Azar and Phthisis.

The germs of Cholera are found in millions in the stool, urine and vomits of a Cholera patient. These are not ordinarily found in drinking water, unless it has been recently contaminated with dejecta of a Cholera patient. The period during which it can live in water is variously estimated from 4 to 10 days, after which it dies out by the action of the sun and wind. So, all the precaution that is required for stamping out Cholera epidemic is strictly limited to make the dejecta of a Sporadic Cholera case occurring in a village absolutely

harmless by using some disinfectant. We have found actual demonstration of this truth by which apprehended outbreak of Cholera epidemics originating from isolated cases, were prevented. The annual Gangasagar Mela used to be followed, on each occasion, by a terrible epidemic of Cholera occurring among the pilgrims ; and then spreading to Calcutta and numerous villages along the banks of the river Hooghly. This was an annual occurrence just as the festival itself. But the adoption of precautionary measures based on this knowledge by the District Board of 24-Perganas, Public Health Department, and various voluntary organisations including the Ramakrishna Mission has checked the evil a good deal. Last three years have not seen some of the devastating epidemics of Cholera of previous occasions ; thus demonstrating that action based on the knowledge of the peculiarity of this unseen microscopic world is sure to lead to such brilliant success as to save thousands of precious lives from untimely death. This points to the extreme necessity of this knowledge being the common property of every man, woman or child inhabiting our country.

Malaria is devastating our villages where millions of people could live happy lives, away from the wicked and brutal competition of the towns and making them absolutely uninhabitable. The Malarial parasites are not found in stools or urine of the patients but in the blood vessels situated deep in the human system. For their spread, nature has provided a mosquito which with a deep penetrating, fine hypodermic needle-like stinging apparatus draws out the parasite containing blood unconsciously and after a time when it bites again a healthy man it injects with its saliva deep into the tissues the parasites which start multiplying into countless numbers. The knowledge of the habits of mosquito and the peculiarities of the parasite and other particulars has furnished us with the remedies for the prevention of Malaria. Such remedial measures have been adopted by numerous village societies spread throughout the length and breadth of the land among which Belur society is a bright example. They have produced results commensurate

with the sustained efforts put forth by the village people guided by a spirit of robust optimism—a thing rather rare in this land of fatalism.

Similarly, Kala Azar, a devastating disease supposed to have its origin in Assam, has unsuspectingly been found in almost every village in Bengal and no one knows as yet definitely how it spreads. Lacs are being spent in research laboratories to find out the real cause of this malady. But with the knowledge already in hand we are able to combat the disease if a sufficient supply of medical men and money is forthcoming. The sum required for the eradication of the disease from the whole province is not heavy and does not even exceed the sum that is being spent annually on research. Any one wanting to be convinced of the truth of this statement, has simply to see how Kala Azar problem has been solved at Belur and at what nominal expense. What were the number of cases of Kala Azar in Belur, before the K. A. centre was opened? Seventy. What are they now after the efforts of two patriotic medical men (Dr. Nalin Chatterjee and Dr. Jibananda Mukherjee)? Nil.

Lastly, about the organism causing Tuberculosis or Phthisis or Consumption which takes away thousands of most intelligent and educated youths of our country. I have got something to say on this. This organism has got a peculiarity ; it is not a temporary sojourner in our system producing symptoms revealing its presence in the human being like the Cholera or Plague germs the moment it enters the system. It can live in our system for years without showing any noticeable symptom, though it will ultimately kill most of the victims where it has taken a lodging. One great peculiarity of the germ which is also dependent on the condition of prolonged stay in the human system without showing itself up, is that the environment or circumstances of the sufferer have got a great influence on the activity of the germ. This environment does not mean simply, hill station or the beach of the sea, as is thought by our ordinary medical men. Mental worry, physical labour, and a thousand other things which contribute

to the material well-being of man, have got as much influence on the activity of this germ as staying in hill stations. In nine cases out of ten, medical men not cognisant of all these factors, make a short cut by making dogmatic statements which seem to be truth for the time being, but which after a few years, are found by the patients and their relations as not absolute truth—it is then too late to rectify matters—it results not only in patient's death but also in the dissemination of the germ through spit to his nearest associates, who will again get the same short-sighted advice, based on incomplete knowledge, from our medical men, and be again victims of this advice after 4 or 5 or 10 or 12 years. This is what is going on everywhere in this country. But this is not what is happening in such countries as England, France, Germany or U. S. A. Their actions are far-sighted. Children of phthisical parents are snatched away by what is called Grancher's system in France from the care of their parents long before they get infected and are distributed to healthy families never to return to their parents. Knowing the prolonged period the germ remains in the system without showing itself up, they devise means for early detection. Besides, they know that mere stay in hill stations is not the real panacea for this disease. Thousands of men are contracting the disease while living at Almora, Nainital, Simla, Darjeeling and Kurseong. Worry of life due to financial trouble which is increased by their prolonged stay away from places where they earn their livelihood contributes to the death of the sufferers, and the ozonised air of the hill stations can have but only a temporary effect on the system. To counteract the evil action of this socio-economical factor the European workers have devised a system called Tuberculosis Village Settlements, where the factor of pure air of mountains is given as much importance as the mental worry caused by financial trouble. And accordingly, due importance is given to devising occupations suited to the physical and mental capacities and previous training of the sufferers. These men are quite competent to respect the feeling of the patients as they are equipped with full scientific knowledge on the

subject. This can only be had by bitter experience gathered from actual work and cannot be had from mere book learning. In this country of sunshine and open air, where people live agricultural life and towns are few and far between, people have not yet become completely materialistic and a fraction of our old spiritual life is still retained ; so it is possible as well as easy to put the above truth into practice—if the scientific men of this country versed in the knowledge of the disease join hands with you, in developing a colony.

The system by which it can be done need not be given here in detail. The main principle of the scheme will be to pick up as early as possible, the patients in whom the germ has just found a nidus and settle them in places where they can have plenty of sunshine and ordinary pure air. They will live in such a way that they can manage to earn their livelihood without any arduous labour. Their spiritual side—their mind—has to be looked after so as to make it possible for them to settle there—even if the amenities of the so-called civilised life be not found.

## CHAPTER IV

### ACTIVITIES OF THE REPRESENTED INSTITUTIONS.

The reports read before the Convention by the representatives of the various institutions embody a good deal of information regarding their respective activities, which, we regret, space does not allow us to reproduce *in extenso*. We have therefore in this Chapter decided to put them within the compass of a few classified tables, showing where necessary a few important details illustrated here and there by short notes and comments. For further information we beg to draw the attention of our readers to the annual Reports published by the different centres, which can be obtained on application to the institutions concerned.

In presenting these tables before our readers we deem it necessary to make them clearly understand at the outset the relation of the various institutions, represented at the Convention, with the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. The institutions represented here are not all directly controlled or managed by the Ramakrishna Math or Mission. It is therefore necessary that the relation which they have with either of them should be brought out clearly, so that there may be no occasion for any confusion in the public mind. To comprehend this relation one has to understand also precisely the distinction between the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission organisations. A word of explanation is therefore necessary to show the difference in aim and scope of the Math and Mission and their inter-relation.

The institution known as the Ramakrishna Math originated in the year 1886, when after the Master's

Distinction between the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. ascension some of his young followers took to the life of renunciation and grouped together at the

monastery of Baranagore, a northern suburb of Calcutta. It was this Math which came finally to be established in the year 1899, on its present site at Belur in the district of Howrah, Bengal. This Math is an abode of monks receiving spiritual discipline and also a place where householders get religious instruction and inspiration. The special feature of this Math is that it accommodates in thought and action all forms of spiritual discipline in the light of the wonderful life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and provides religious aspirants belonging to different faiths and creeds with all possible facilities for spiritual development along their own lines. With the same objects in view similar Maths have since sprung up at many places, both in India and abroad.

To extend the scope of the Math with regard to the propagation of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings, Swami Vivekananda inaugurated in the year 1897 a brotherhood of the lay and monastic disciples, followers and admirers of Sri Ramakrishna. This association was styled "The Ramakrishna Mission" for reasons stated explicitly by the Swami in the following words :—

"This Association will bear the name of him, by whose inspiration we have taken to this life of Sannyasa, accepting whom as the ideal you have been leading the life of householders; whose sacred name and the influence of whose unique life and teachings have scarcely within

these twelve years (one yuga) of his passing away, spread in an unthought-of way both here and in the West. Therefore let this Association (Sangha) be named as the Ramakrishna Mission. We are only the servants of the Master. May you all help us in our endeavours !'

The Association, as originally intended, was to have its head-quarters in Calcutta. It worked there for sometime but as the monastery at Belur grew in strength and importance, and absorbed its functions this Association ceased to work as a separate body in Calcutta. Nevertheless the name Ramakrishna Mission came to be loosely used in connection with the missionary, philanthropic and educational activities which in the meantime had been started in various places by the monks of the Order with the help of the lay followers of Sri Ramakrishna and the sympathetic public. The direction and control of these activities proceeded from the monastery at Belur. As with the lapse of time these activities began gradually to assume extensive proportions with increased public responsibilities, difficulties more of a technical nature arose which pressed upon the workers the need for a constitution recognised by the law of the land. To obviate such difficulties an association denominated "The Ramakrishna Mission" was registered and incorporated in May, 1909, for the specific object of carrying on missionary, philanthropic and educational activities under Act XXI of 1860 of the Governor-General in Council, with a Governing Body, a Memorandum of Association and a set of Rules and Bye-laws for its management and conduct. Although the Ramakrishna Mission is mainly constituted by the monks of the

Ramakrishna Order carrying on and directing these activities, in view of the fact that it is solely devoted to works of public utility, it has naturally enlisted membership and support from the general public as well.

Thus the Ramakrishna Math and Mission are twin institutions embodying respectively the two national ideals of India *viz.*, Renunciation and Service. But from the technical point of view they are two separate organisations controlled and managed by two distinct constitutions. The Ramakrishna Math is owned and controlled by a Committee of Trustees, with a President, by virtue of the powers vested in them by the "Debutter Deed" of Swami Vivekananda registered in 1899. Apart from this legal aspect the Math preserves also the traditional character and polity of a monastic order with the President of the Trustees as its Head or Adhyaksha. The Math thus is an organisation complete by itself, and together with its various ramifications at different places, is purely and exclusively concerned with the brotherhood of Sannyasins and Brahmacharins, and stands primarily for the preservation of the Ideal. The Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission being collateral and inter-dependent institutions, it was thought most desirable, nay indispensable, that there should be a consistency and a co-ordination in the policy and management of these twin institutions. It is out of regard for this consideration that the Trustees of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, formed the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission as well for the guidance and management of the mission activities stated above.

Different organisations as they are, the Math and the

Mission have separate funds and accounts. The Math fund consists of private donations from friends and followers of the Ramakrishna Order earmarked exclusively for Puja, Utsab (festivals), maintenance of monks, establishment etc. In many of the Maths this fund is further strengthened by the proceeds from their publication department. For mission work, both temporary as well as permanent, subscriptions and donations are collected from the general public and disbursed, according to the bye-laws of the Memorandum of Association of the Ramakrishna Mission. Practically a number of funds corresponding to the various activities of the Ramakrishna Mission fed by specified contributions go to constitute the Mission fund. Thus so far as finance is concerned the Math and the Mission are absolutely independent of each other.

Now, as regards the relation between the institutions represented at the Convention and the Ramakrishna

*Relation of the various institutions with the Ramakrishna Math and*

Math and Mission organisations at Belur, we take this opportunity to point out here that

Sri Ramakrishna or Vivekananda attached to any Society or Association does not necessarily imply its connection with the central organisations. According to the different nature of this relation these institutions have been classified under the following heads :—

- I. Maths and Ashramas owned and controlled by the Committee of Trustees of the Belur Math.
- II. Seva centres (including Educational) affiliated

to the Ramakrishna Mission as Branch Centres according to the Memorandum of Association.

- III.. (a) Other Maths or Ashramas (Preaching and Publishing Centres) conducted by the Monastic members of the Order deputed by the Committee of Trustees of the Belur Math.
- (b) Seva centres (including Educational) not affiliated to the Ramakrishna Mission as Branch Centres but conducted on similar lines by the monastic members of the Order deputed by the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission.
- IV. Maths, Ashramas or Seva centres (working on similar lines as the *bonafide* Math and Mission Centres) conducted by the monastic members of the Order with the approval of the Trustees of the Belur Math or the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission, but at their own responsibility.
- V. Maths, Ashramas or Seva centres (working on similar lines as the *bonafide* Math and Mission Centres) conducted by an individual or a group of individuals at their own responsibility *under the guidance of* or having a formal connection with the President of the Committee of the Trustees of the Belur Math or any one of the office-bearers of the Governing Body of the

Ramakrishna Mission (while in office) in his individual capacity.

- VI. Maths, Ashramas or Seva centres (working on similar lines as the *bonafide* Math and Mission Centres) conducted by an individual or a group of individuals independently or with which any member of the Order may be directly or indirectly connected but which *have not secured the approval* of either the Committee of Trustees of the Belur Math or the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission or any of their office-bearers.

All the institutions represented at the Convention come under the above six groups. Of them those under groups I, II, III (a) and III (b) are *bonafide* Centres of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission; those under groups IV and V have no formal connection with the Ramakrishna Math and Mission; while group VI contain only those institutions which are independent of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

A classified list of the institutions represented at the Convention showing their relation with the Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission at Belur is given in Appendix II.



## **1. PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITIES.**

Philanthropic works when done in a spirit of disinterested service leads to spiritual advancement through self-purification ; by serving man as veritable manifestation of God one can grow spiritually and at the same time contribute to the general well-being of humanity. These ideals of service as expounded by Swami Vivekananda have begun to propagate themselves over India and abroad and his fellow brothers, disciples and countrymen have helped to translate them into institutions. Thus the philanthropic activities of the Ramakrishna Mission are undertaken as a part of spiritual sadhana providing as they do a means of self-purification through disinterested works. In the following are given different forms of activities that fall under this head :—

**TABLE I.**  
**PERMANENT PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITIES.**

**A. HOSPITALS (IN-DOOR DEPARTMENT).**

The following institutions maintain regular beds for the accommodation of helpless sick persons. The number of beds of course varies with the means and resources at their disposal and local demands for the same. Up-to-date scientific treatment is as far as possible provided in all cases. The systems of treatment followed include Allopathic, Homoeopathic as well as Ayurvedic.

Name of Institutions.	Place.	Number of beds maintained.	Average No. of persons served annually.	Remarks
1. Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service ...	Benares ...	108	1037	There is a separate Ward for women with 46 beds detached from the rest of the premises and it is managed by a band of women workers under a Lady Superintendent. There is also a well-furnished up-to-date Operation Theatre. There are two separate Invalid Homes, one for males and the other for females. The former is situated in the

Home proper and contains 25 beds. There are only 4 male invalids residing in the Home. The Refuge for invalid women is at the Dasaswamedh Ghat. Twelve invalid women are being accommodated and provided there. Besides, there are 4 invalid women in the Female Department of the Hospital.

2. Ramakrishna shrama ...	Mission	Seva-	Kankhal (Hardwar)	...	64	731	
3. Ramakrishna shrama ...	Mission	Seva-	Brindaban	...	12	160	Three beds are set apart for women.
4. Advaita Ashrama ...	...	...	Mayavati (Almora)	...	6	25	
5. Vivekananda Ashrama ...	...	...	Sharmatal (Almora)	...	2	10	
6. Ramakrishna Sevashrama ...	...	...	Bankura	...	6	30	Two beds are set apart for women.
7. Ramakrishna Sevashrama ...	...	...	Midnapur	...	8	83	
8. Ramakrishna Sevashrama ...	...	...	Tamluk (Midnapur)	...	2	20	

A. HOSPITALS (IN-DOOR DEPARTMENT).—*Contd.*

Name of Institutions.	Place.	Number of beds main-tained.	Average No. of persons served annually.	Remarks.
9. Ramakrishna Mission Branch Centre ...	Dacca	...	4	27
10. Ramakrishna Mission Seva-shrama ...	Rangoon (Burma)	...	44	1262

Besides, helpless sick persons are sometimes picked up from the way-side and temporarily housed and treated at many other institutions of which the following may be particularly mentioned here :—

1. Ramakrishna Seva Sadan, Salkea (Howrah).
2. Ramakrishna Ashrama, Chandipur (Midnapur).
3. Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Chittagong.
4. Ramakrishna Ashrama and Seva Samity, Sylhet.

**TABLE II.**  
**PERMANENT PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITIES.**

**B. CHARITABLE DISPENSARIES (OUT-PATIENTS' DEPARTMENT).**

The following institutions distribute medicines free to poor people and also provide them with diet if necessary.

Name of Institutions.	Place.	Average annual attendance.	REMARKS.
1. Ramakrishna Mission Charitable Dispensary ... ...	Belur Math ...	13,797	Specific treatment of Kala-Azaz, Malaria and Dysentery is given free. Patients are also treated and served at their own houses under exceptional circumstances.
2. Ramakrishna Seva Sadan ...	Salkeia (Howrah) ...	5,893	
3. Ditto Sevashrama ...	Bankura ...	3,650	
4. Ditto Math & Matrimandir	Jayarambati (Bankura) ...	7,300	
5. Ramakrishna Mission Yoga-shrama ... ...	Koalpara (Bankura) ...	1,900	

B. CHARITABLE DISPENSARIES (OUT-PATIENTS' DEPARTMENT).—*Contd.*

Name of Institutions.	Place.	Average annual attendance.	Remarks.
6. Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Dahar Kundū (Hooghly)...	2,100	
7. Ditto do	Midnapore ...	12,900	
8. Ditto do.	Tamluk (Midnapore) ...	3,650	
9. Ditto do	Contai (Midnapore) ...	5,000	
10. Vivekananda Society	Calcutta ...	2,800	
11. Ramakrishna do.	Parsibagan (Calcutta) ...	3,500	
12. Ditto Mission Orphanage	Baranagore ...	8,000	
13. Ditto do. Ashrama...	Sarisha, Diamond Harbour	1,825	
14. Ditto do. do. ...	Sargachi (Murshidabad) ...	5,000	
15. Ditto Seva Samity	Malda ...	2,792	Specific treatment of Kala-Azar and Malaria given free.
16. Ditto Ashrama ...	Dinajpore ...	6,200	Ditto

17.	Ditto	Vedanta Ashrama	Darjeeling	...	...	5,500
18.	Ditto Centre	Mission	Branch	...	...	1,300
19.	Ramakrishna shrama	Mission	Seva-shrama	...	...	1,623
20.	Ramakrishna shrama	Mission	Seva-shrama	...	Narayanganj (Dacca)	...
21.	Ramakrishna shrama	Mission	Seva-shrama	...	Sonargaon	...
22.	Ramakrishna Seva Samity	...	..	Balitali	"	5,376
23.	Ditto	Sevashrama	...	Kalma	"	1,300
24.	Ditto	Ashrama	...	Durpara	"	1,987
25.	Ditto	Sevashrama	...	Debhog (Faridpore)	...	1,200
					Specific treatment of Kala-Azar given free.	
26.	Ramakrishna Ashrama Tamaltala	...	Ranganj (Noakhali)	...	1,825	Has organised an Anti-Malarial Society which is affiliated to the Central Anti-Malarial Society in Calcutta.
27.	Ramakrishna Sadhan Mandir	...	Chandipore	...	3,000	Chandpur (Tipperah) ...
					1,460	

B. CHARITABLE DISPENSARIES (OUT-PATIENTS' DEPARTMENT).—*Contd.*

Name of Institutions.	Place.	Average annual attendance.	Remarks.
28. Ramakrishna Seva Samity ...	Sylhet ... ...	1,798	This number includes the figures of two other branch Dispensaries at Devpur and Dulali.
29. Ditto , Ashrama ...	Shella (Khasia Hills) ...	1,460	
30. Ditto Mission Seva-shrama ... ...	Rangoon ... ...	73,800	
31. Ramakrishna Sevashrama ...	Araria (Purnea) ...	18,250	
32. Ditto Mission Branch Centre ... ...	Bhubaneswar ...	5,773	
33. Ramakrishna Mission Seva-shrama ... ...	Benares ...	44,165	
34. Ramakrishna Mission Seva-shrama ... ...	Allahabad ...	18,271	
35. Ramakrishna Mission Seva-shrama ... ...	Lucknow ...	10,950	

36.	Ramakrishna shram	Mission	Seva-	Brindaban	...	...	21,818
37.	Ramakrishna Seva Sadan	...	...	Cawnpore	...	...	40,000
38.	Advaita Ashrama	...	...	Mayavati (Almora)	...	...	2,190
39.	Ramakrishna shrama	Mission	Seva-	Kankhal (Hardwar)	...	...	45,625
40.	Vivekananda Ashrama	...	...	Shamlatal (Almora)	...	500	
41.	Ramakrishna Tapovan	...	...	Dharchula	,,	...	750
42.	Ditto	Ashrama	...	Bombay	...	...	1,200
43.	Ditto	Math	Charitable Dispensary	Madras	...	...	10,950

In the above table only such of the dispensaries have been enumerated as show a record of over 1,000 patients treated in a year. Exception has been made in the case of the dispensaries at Shamlatal and Dharchula, in the district of Almora in the Himalayas, in view of the fact that they are situated in out-of-the-way villages in the hill areas. A few prominent charitable dispensaries omitted in the above list are mentioned below together with some institutions which have not stated in their reports the exact number of the patients treated.

Name of Institutions.				Place.
1. Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Ashrama				Khurut (Howrah).
2. Ditto Anath Ashrama	...	...	...	Asansol.
3. Ditto Ashrama	...	...	...	Chandipur (Midnapur).
4. Ditto Sevashrama	...	...	...	Garbeta do.
5. Ditto do.	...	...	...	Ghatal do.
6. Ditto do.	...	...	...	Rarhikhal (Dacca).
7. Ditto do.	...	...	...	Gowpara do.
8. Ditto Shanti Ashrama				Jandi (Faridpur).
9. Ditto Seva Samity	...	...	...	Faridpur.
10. Ditto Sevashrama	...	...	...	Chittagong.
11. Ditto do.	...	...	...	Hajiganj (Comilla).
12. Ditto Seva Samity	...	...	...	Habiganj (Sylhet).
13. Ditto do.	...	...	...	Karimganj do.
14. Ditto Ashrama				Kunda (Deoghar)
15. Ditto Dharmashrama				Trichur (Cochin).
16. Ditto Ashrama	...	...	...	Nattayam (Trivandrum).
17. Yogananda do.	...	...	...	Alleppey (Travancore).
18. Ramakrishna do.	...	...	...	Haripad do.
19. Premananda do.	...	...	...	Muttom do.

## OTHER PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITIES.

### REGULAR AND CASUAL.

Philanthropic activities other than Hospital and Dispensary work are regularly or from time to time undertaken by almost all the represented institutions according as circumstances demand and the resources at their disposal permit. These activities may fall under the following groups :—

- (a) Helping poor students with monthly or occasional aid and sometimes with books, stationery, etc.
- (b) Helping indigent families, widows, invalids, orphans, etc., with occasional or monthly contributions in cash, clothes, rice or other things.
- (c) Nursing poor and helpless patients at their own houses under exceptional circumstances and also picking up helpless diseased persons from the wayside and arranging for their treatment, etc., in local Sevashramas, Hospitals, or otherwise.
- (d) Undertaking the cremation of dead bodies when such aid is absolutely needed.
- (e) Organising Relief Measures for the general welfare of pilgrims, etc., during big concourses at the Melas.
- (f) Organising temporary Relief Measures in the neighbouring villages during epidemics.

**TABLE III.**

**TEMPORARY RELIEF WORK.**

Distinct from the above permanent activities for relief of the helpless, the diseased and the destitute, such sudden scourges of nature as Plague, Cholera and other epidemics as well as Flood, Famine, Fire, etc., have also from time to time claimed the services of the Ramakrishna Mission. As it is not possible for any one party or organisation to combat the situation created by such visitations of nature, it is necessary that every district, nay every sub-division of a district, should have a standing organisation which will always hold itself in readiness to fight them within their respective areas with as much local help as possible. From the recent record of relief operations conducted by various parties from the public it may be hoped that such a scheme for permanent organisations suited to the needs of this country has a chance of being materialised in the near future.

A summarised statement of some important relief operations is given below :—

(1) An orphanage with 444 children was maintained for more than ten months after which the orphans were handed over to their relatives or otherwise provided for.

(2) One party of workers moved from village to village and distributed food-stuff to the distressed clothing to 400 persons and helped them with money to repair and build new habitable sheds.

(3) Cholera and fever broke out and medical relief was also rendered during the period.

(4) Maintained an orphanage with 21 orphans, a day-school and a poor house with 13 inmates; offered medical relief, working materials to artisans etc., seeds for cultivation and repaired several roads and embankments.

(5) Pecuniary help was given to 753 families of the middle class from 196 villages. For 384 families 558 huts were built; 1,000 pieces of new and old cloths were also distributed. Temporary relief was given to 2,500 persons.

1918—1920	Sonthal Paiganas (11)	...	"	Famine	...	May-Oct.	87	"	"	...	2,344
	Puri	...	"	"	...	June-Dec.	1919	32	"	(12) and	319
	Tipperah (14)	...	"	"	...	June-Nov.	1920	115	"	(13)	2,779
	East Bengal (Districts of Dacca, Faridpur, Barisal and Khulna.) (15)	...	Cyclone	...	April-Oct.	1919	43	"	..."	...	2,926
1921	Cuttack (16)	...	Flood	...	Oct. 1919-Jan. 1920	425	villages	...	12,933		
	Midnapur (17)	...	"	...	Oct.-Dec.	1920	49	"	...	702	
	Chandpur and Goalundo (18)	...	Cooly exodus from Assam	...	Aug.-Sep.	,"	20	"	...	352	
	Khulna (Nakipur) (19)	...	Tea Estates...	...	May--June 1921	76	centres...	...	15,378		
	Midnapur (20)	...	Famine	...	June-Dec. 1921	103	villages	...	2,790		
	Rajshahi (21)	...	Flood	...	Aug.-Oct. 1922	92	"	...	1,149		
1922—1923	Do	Dubalhati	..."	..."	Oct.-Nov.	15	"	...	1,752		
			..."	..."	April-June 1923	91	"	..."			

(11) Distributed 624 new cloths and over 17 maunds of seeds.

(12) Distributed 247 new cloths.

(13) Distributed 300 new cloths.

(14) Distributed 157 new cloths.

(15) Distributed 3,195 new cloths, built 464 huts, treated 2,157 patients.

(16) Rs. 1,440-10-0 as pecuniary help for husking etc. and Rs. 98-4 as pecuniary help to middle class families.

(17) 250 huts were built.

(18) Pecuniary help to 818 persons; 350 Rly. tickets from Goalundo to Naihati and about 100 new cloths were also given. Outbreak of Cholera occurred and patients were treated and nursed.

(19) 1,236 patients were treated and supplied with diet; distributed 2,628 new cloths and 203 winter clothing and blankets.

(20) 148 huts constructed; 320 new cloths distributed.

(21) Fodder for cattle; 1,276 new cloths and 40 blankets distributed; pecuniary help for hut-building and husking etc.

22) 18 huts built; 150 new cloths distributed.

22 huts built; 16 new cloths given.

24) 275 new cloths and 300 blankets distributed; 495 huts built.

25} 716 cloths distributed.

26) 315 cloths distributed.  
27) 4,532 cloths distributed and 7,036 huts built.

In the following are mentioned some other works of a similar nature undertaken by the Mission Headquarters which have not been detailed in the above statement :—

Famine relief at Mahula in the district of Murshidabad, Deoghar, Dakshineshwar and Dinajpur in 1897 and 1898; Relief during a *landslide* at Darjeeling in 1899; flood at Behala Bishnupur in 1900, at Silchar 1917, Muttra in 1919, Amherst (Burma) in 1920, Rishikesh, Dehra Dun, Bhagalpur, Brindaban and Muttra in 1924 and Brindaban again in 1925; during epidemics, such as the prevalence of *Plague* in Calcutta in the years 1899 and 1900, at Bhagalpur in 1904, 1905 and 1912, the Punjab (Lahore, Delhi and Rohtak) in 1924 ; Influenza in Benares, Balasore, Bhubaneswar and Raniganj in 1918; in Manbhum and Midnapur in 1920; Cholera at Garh-Krishnaprasad in 1908, at Jayanti 1924, at Araria 1925; during outbreaks of *Fire* at Bhubaneswar and Brindaban in 1917, Midnapur in 1919, Puri and Murshidabad in 1920, Jessore and Murshidabad in 1922, in Manbhumi (Jituyini), Bhubaneswar, Manasarhat (Diamond Harbour) in 1923, in Burdwan, Kamrup, Masalandpur, Bankura, Birbhum, at Sarisha and Ramdanga in 1924, in Manbhumi and Bhubaneswar in 1925.

From the year 1912 the Ramakrishna Mission has been regularly sending workers every year to give all possible relief and succour to the diseased and helpless pilgrims at the Ganga Sagar Mela. The Dacca branch of the Mission has been carrying on similar relief activities at Astami Snan Mela at Nangalbund (Narayanganj) from the year 1915, and the Mission Sevashramas at Kankhal (Hardwar) and Allahabad also organise and carry on relief operations at Kumbha Melas.

## **2. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES.**

As the Ramakrishna Mission has been doing its best to hold aloft its ideal of service in philanthropic activities, similarly, it has undertaken in its humble way several types of educational works which may be classified as follows :—

- (1) Leisure-hour training by providing library, gymnasium, social work and scouting.
- (2) Schools for boys and girls.
- (3) Homes or Boarding Houses for boys or girls where inmates receive supplementary, physical, moral and religious instructions.
- (4) Residential schools separately for boys and girls affording them opportunities to live in close touch with their teachers after the ideal of Gurukula.
- (5) Institutions for poor middle-class boys and youths (orphanages) with an industrial section attached to them for the economic welfare of the inmates.
- (6) Homes or Hostels for poor students who in addition to their academic education receive physical, moral and religious instructions along with vocational training.

TABLE IV.  
EDUCATIONAL WORK.

A. SCHOOLS FOR BOYS.					
Serial No.	Name of Institutions.	Mission	Head-quarters.	Number of Students.	REMARKS.
1	Ramakrishna Belur.	... Mission	... Head-quarters. ... ...	10	A free Industrial School with a free Boarding-house attached for poor boys. The course includes Spinning, Weaving, Tailoring, Dyeing & Cleaning and Carpentry. Supplementary Primary education is also provided for the pupils. The boys residing at the Boarding-house are brought up in the healthy atmosphere of the Ashrama life.
2	Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Kharut (Howrah).	... Ashrama.	... ...	310	A High English School called "The Vivekananda Institution." It has since been affiliated to the Calcutta University.
3	Ramakrishna Sevashrama and Sarada Pith.	Garbeta (Midnapur).	Sarada Ashrama.	... ...	A Free M.E. School with a Boarding-house. Vocational training in spinning and weaving forms part of the regular course.
4	Ramakrishna Dacca.	... Mission	Branch Centre	... ...	A Free M.E. School.

A. SCHOOLS FOR BOYS.—*Contd.*

Serial No.	Name of Institutions.	Number of Students.	REMARKS
5	Ramakrishna Sonargaon (Dacca) Mission	19	A free M. E. School.
6	Ramakrishna Balitali (Dacca) Mission	...	A Free M.E. School. Vocational training in spinning and weaving is given to the boys as part of the regular course. A Free Sanskrit Tol (for study of Kavya and Vyakaran).
7	Ramakrishna (Dacca) Sevashrama.	30	A High Eng. School. It is affiliated to the Calcutta University.
8	Ramakrishna ('Tipperah) Sevashram.	300	A Free M.E. School.
9	Ramakrishna Chandipur (Noakhali) Ashrama.	80	A Free M.E. School.
10	Ramakrishna Ashrama. Hills)	9	A Free Sanskrit Tol (for study of Kavya and Vyakaran).
	Sheila (Khasia Hills)	60	A Free M.E. School for Khasia boys and girls. It receives Khasia State aid in the form of an annual grant.

11	Ramakrishna Deoghar (S. P.)	Mission	Vidyapith.	46	A residential school for Hindu boys up to the matriculation standard of the Calcutta University, under the management of the monks of the Ramakrishna Mission. The school aims at imparting an all-round education with a view to bringing about a harmonious development of the head, hand and heart of the boys. The course of studies followed seeks to combine spiritual, physical and practical training with academic education.
12	Ramakrishna Mission Madras	Students' Home.	... ... ... ...	101	A Residential High School for Hindu boys and an Industrial Institute. The School and the Industrial Institute form part of the Students' Home mentioned in its proper place. Religious and Physical training occupies a very important place in the regular course. The boys receive vocational training which includes carpentry, rattan work, weaving and goldsmith's craft. In the Industrial Institute weaving, carpentry and cabinet-making are taught for the present. The full course extends to four years. Students from outside are taken in the Institute. They receive also general education side by side, special emphasis being laid on practical business training.
13	Ramakrishna Ashram.	Mysore	...	25	Free extension Classes are held for plucked Matric students. Poor students unable to get admission into any recognised school are coached in all the subjects. Some teachers of the local H.E. Schools help in running these classes.

A. SCHOOLS FOR BOYS.—*Contd.*

Serial No.	Name of Institutions.	Number of Students.	REMARKS,
14	Ramakrishna Dharmashrama. (Cochin)	489	A High Eng. School for Boys. Supplementary vocational training forms part of the regular course. Students are further guided and helped in conducting a Co-Operative Stores for themselves. The management looks to their moral and religious training also.
15	Ramakrishna Math. Jaffna (Ceylon) ...	125	An Eng. High School (The Vaidyeswara Vidyalya). Special care is taken so that the students may develop morally and spiritually.
16	Ditto Ashrama. (Ceylon)	120	An Eng. School for Hindu boys. Special care is taken so that the students may develop morally and spiritually.
17	Ramakrishna Archanaalaya. Calcutta	... ...	... ...
18	Ramakrishna Sevashrama. (Midnapur)	50	A Free Primary School for Doms and Bhangis. It receives a grant-in-aid from the Calcutta Corporation.
19	Ramakrishna Ashrama. (Midnapur)	20	A Free Night School for Sonthais.
		22	A Free Night School.

20	Ramakrishna Ashrama. (Midnapur)	Ashrama.	Chandipur	20	A Free Primary School.
21	Ramakrishna (Midnapur)	Sevashrama.	Contai	29	A Free L. P. School for boys and girls combined. Magic Lantern lectures are periodically given in the neighbouring villages.
22	Ramakrishna Anath Ashrama. (Burdwan)	... ... ...	Asansol Koalpara (Bankura)	19	A Free L. P. School.
23	Ramakrishna Mission Koalpara (Bankura)	Yogashrama, ... ...	...		A Free Secondary School. Vocational training in spinning and weaving is also given to earnest students.
24	Ramakrishna Sevashrama. Daha Kundu (Bankura)	... ...	...	42	A Free L.P. Day-school and a Night school.
25	Ramakrishna and Jayramvati (Bankura)	Matri Mandir, ...	...	25	A Free Primary School for boys and girls.
26	Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama. (Dimond Harbour)	Sarisha ...	...	35	A Free Primary School with a section for vocational training in spinning and weaving. The Ashrama has also organised a Boy-Scout movement with the students of the local H.E. School.
27	Ramakrishna Naravanganj (Dacca)	Mission ...	Sevashrama, ...	16	A Free Primary School.
28	Ramakrishna (Dacca)	Sevashrama. ...	Gowpara ...	35	Ditto.

A. SCHOOLS FOR BOYS.—*Contd.*

Serial No.	Name of Institutions.	Number of Students.	REMARKS.
29	Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Duppara (Dacca) ...	50	A Free Primary School for boys of the Depressed Classes.
30	Ramakrishna Seva Samity, Kalmna (Dacca) ...	59	A Free Primary School. There is an Industrial section where Match manufacturing is taught.
31	Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Rarhikhali (Dacca) ...	200	There are four Free Primary Schools. They are situated in different villages.
32	Ramakrishna Seva Samity, Habiganj (Sylhet) ...	58	There are three Free Night Schools for the depressed classes. They are situated in different villages inhabited by Shoe-makers. A shoe manufactory has been attached to these schools for training the boys in shoe-making.
33	Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Panchakhanda (Sylhet) ...	20	A Free Night School.
34	Ramakrishna Samity, Faridpur	15	A Free Primary Day School.
35	Ramakrishna Shanti Ashrama, Jandi (Faridpur) ...	25	A Free Primary School.

36	Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Sargachi (Murshidabad)	...	...	25 10	A Free Secondary School and A Free Night School.
37	Ramakrishna Samity. Malda	...	...	35	There are two Free Night Schools.
38	Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama. Dar- jeeling	...	...	45	A Free Primary School for Hill Boys and Girls.
39	Ramakrishna Seva Samity. (Assam)	Seva Samity.	Jorhat	16	A Free Night School for Methar Boys.
40	Ramakrishna Ashrama. Patna	...	...	15	A Free Night School. The Ashrama has also orga- nised an Association with the younger boys of the locality where they get some supplementary physical and moral training. The Association has been pro- vided with a library and a Gymnasium.
41	Ramakrishna Ashrama. (Deoghar)	Ashrama.	Kunda	30	A Free Primary School.
42	Vivekananda Society.	Jamshedpur	...	96	A Free Primary School and a Night School. Sup- plementary manual training is given to the boys.
43	Ramakrishna Sevashrama. Lucknow	...	...	25	A Free Primary School.
44	Ditto Mission Sevashrama. Kan- khal (Hardwar)	...	...	41	A Free I. P. School.
45	Ramakrishna Tapovan. (The Himalayas)	Dharchula	...	9	An Upper Primary School for Pahari boys. They live in the Ashrama; the parents of the boys contribute their food in kind.

A. SCHOOLS FOR BOYS.—*Contd.*

Serial No.	Name of Institutions,	Number of Students.	REMARKS.
46	Ditto Ashrama, Haripad (Travancore) ...      ...      ...	{ 45 10	A Free Primary School for the Panchamas and a Weaving School.
47	Ramakrishna Math. Jaffna (Ceylon) ...	127	A Free Tamil School.
48	Ditto Ashrama. Trincomalee (Ceylon)      ...      ...      ...	127	A Free Vernacular School.
49	Ramakrishna Ashrama. Batticaloa (Ceylon)      ...      ...      ...	{ 150 158 336	A Free Tamil School. A Free Tamil Varnacular School. Ditto      do Karatwin.—A Free Primary School.
		37	

**TABLE V.**  
**B. SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS AND PURDAH WOMEN.**

Serial No.	Name of Institutions.	Number of Students.	REMARKS.
1	Nivedita Girls' School. Calcutta	...	A Free School for Girls and Purdah Women with a Boarding-house attached. The Institution seeks to impress the pupils with Hindu ideals of life. There is a Matri Mandir attached to the Nivedita Girls' School, where some of the teachers who have devoted their lives to the institution and resident students live. There are Day-scholars as well. Some of the students of the higher classes teach the students of the lower classes and Vocational training in tailoring and clay-modelling is imparted to the girls.
2	Ditto do. do. Bally (Howrah)	30	A Free Primary School.
3	Ramakrishna Ashrama. (Midnapur) ...	... ... ...	A Free Girls' School with a section for Purdah women.
4	Ramakrishna Mission Ballati (Dacca)	... ... ...	A Free M. E. School.

B. SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS AND PURDAH WOMEN.—*Contd.*

Serial No.	Name of Institutions.	Number of Students.	REMARKS.
5	Ramakrishna (Dacca). Sevashrama. Duptara	20	A Free Primary School.
6	Ramakrishna (Dacca) ... Seva Samity. Kalma	33	Ditto.
7	Ramakrishna Seva Samity, Sylhet ...	12	Ditto. (At Devpur).
8	Nivedita Girls' School. Comilla ...	107	A School for Girls and Purdah. Women The school is run and managed after the model of its sister institution in Calcutta. The School has a Home attached to it.
8a	Ditto do. ...	24	The inmates of the Home include seven of the teaching staff.
9	Ramakrishna Ashrama. Tamaltala Chandipur (Noakhali). ... ...	40	A Free Primary School.
10	Ramakrishna Math and Mission Branch. Madras ... ... ...	172	M. E. School. Tamil forms the medium of instruction. Special attention is given to religious education and some useful forms of vocational training.
11	Ramakrishna Dharmashrama. Trichur (Cochin) ... ...	281	A Free Lower Secondary School.

TABLE VI.  
C. HOMES FOR POOR STUDENTS.

Serial No.	Name of Institutions,	Number of Students.	REMARKS.
1	Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home. Calcutta.	24	<p>A Home for poor unmarried deserving youths going up for higher education, who get here free of cost every thing they require during their college career. The idea of the Home has been to co-ordinate the ancient Indian ideal of Brahmacharya with the requirements of the modern education by supplementing the academic education which the students receive at the University with spiritual, cultural and practical training in the atmosphere of a purely Ashrama life.</p> <p>In the Home there is a Chapel; regular physical exercise is insisted upon; a Mss.' Magazine is conducted by the inmates; business and industrial training is afforded on a small scale, book-binding and tailoring are taught. The inmates perform all house-hold duties themselves except cooking.</p> <p>The Home has a provision for admitting a minority of paying students also. It is licensed by the Calcutta University as a college students' Hostel.</p>

B. SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS AND PURDAH WOMEN.—*Contd.*

Serial No.	Name of Institutions.	Number of Students.	REMARKS.
5	Ramakrishna Sevashrama. Duptara (Dacca). ...	20	A Free Primary School.
6	Ramakrishna Seva Samity. Kalma (Dacca) ...	33 12	Ditto. Ditto (At Devpur).
7	Ramakrishna Seva Samity, Sylhet ...		
8	Nivedita Girls' School. Comilla ...	107	A School for Girls and Purdah. Women The school is run and managed after the model of its sister institution in Calcutta. The School has a Home attached to it.
8a	Ditto do. ...	24	The inmates of the Home include seven of the teaching staff.
9	Ramakrishna Ashrama. Tamaltala Chandpur (Noakhali). ...	40	A Free Primary School.
10	Ramakrishna Math and Mission Branch. Madras ...	... ...	M. E. School. Tamil forms the medium of instruction. Special attention is given to religious education and some useful forms of vocational training.
11	Ramakrishna Dharmashrama. Trichur (Cochin) ...	281	A Free Lower Secondary School.

TABLE VI.  
C. HOMES FOR POOR STUDENTS.

Serial No.	Name of Institutions.	Number of Students.	REMARKS.
I	Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home. Calcutta.	24	A Home for poor unmarried deserving youths going up for higher education, who get here free of cost every thing they require during their college career. The idea of the Home has been to co-ordinate the ancient Indian ideal of Brahmacharya with the requirements of the modern education by supplementing the academic education which the students receive at the University with spiritual, cultural and practical training in the atmosphere of a purely Ashrama life. In the Home there is a Chapel; regular physical exercise is insisted upon; a MSS Magazine is conducted by the inmates; business and industrial training is afforded on a small scale, book-binding and tailoring are taught. The inmates perform all house-hold duties themselves except cooking. The Home has a provision for admitting a minority of paying students also. It is licensed by the Calcutta University as a college students' Hostel.

C. HOMES FOR POOR STUDENTS.—*Contd.*

Serial No.	Name of Institutions.	Number of Students.	REMARKS.
2	Ramakrishna (Howrah)	Seva Sadan,	Salkea 5
3	Ramakrishna Math.	Bankura ...	A Free students' Home for poor boys and youths. A Home for poor boys reading in schools. Two of these boys live free and two are given concession.
4	Ditto	Sevashrama.	Chittagong 12
5	Ditto	Ashrama. Debhog (Farid- pur)	A Home for poor school students of the locality.
6	Ramakrishna Cuttack (Orissa)	Sevak Sampradaya. ...	A Home for poor students.
7	Ramakrishna Benares	Mission Home of Service. ...	A Home for Girl students. The Home is attached to the women workers' quarters under the lady superin- tendent of the female department of the Sevashrama.
8	Ditto	Sevashrama. Cawnpore... Mission Students' Home.	A Free Students' Home.
9	Ditto Madras	...	A Home for poor unmarried deserving college students and students of the residential and industrial schools attached. This Home forms the Boarding department of the residential school as well as a Home for students passing out of the school and wishing to con-

inue their studies further up. New admission of college students is strictly limited. The Home and the Residential school, therefore, form parts of one whole. The number of inmates is distributed as follows :—

Colleges : Arts...22, and professional...5; Residential school...79 Industrial Institute...16 (excluding Day scholars).

Students come both from Brahmin and Non-Brahmin sections and are housed together.

The Home affords supplementary, spiritual, cultural, physical and practical training. There is a shrine where all students congregate morning and evening to offer prayers and worship. The Home has a library separate from the school library, containing over 4000 books. Moral and religious instruction classes and also classes on the scriptures grouped into three grades form essential parts of the daily life in the Home. The inmates themselves manage and do all house-hold duties including menial works except cooking. The Home has provision for admission of paying boarders whose number is restricted to 25% of the total strength.

A Free Home for unmarried youths seeking college education. The Home is situated in separate premises close to the Ashram. The inmates of the Home offer their morning and evening prayers and join the religious classes held for them at the Ashram.

16

Bangalore  
...

Ramakrishna Ashrama.

10


TABLE VII.  
D. HOMES FOR POOR BOYS.

Serial No.	Name of Institutions.	Number of Students.	REMARKS.
1	Ramakrishna Mission Orphanage. Barranagore (Calcutta)	25	There is a M.E. School attached to the Home with a section for vocational training in various arts and crafts. Religious instructions form an essential part of the training. There is a shrine where the boys attend regular congregational services.
2	Ramakrishna Society & Anath Bhendar, Bowbazar (Calcutta)	26	Boys are admitted into outside schools. The society provides for their supplementary, practical and vocational training. There is a shrine attached to the Home where the boys offer their morning and evening prayers.
3	Ramakrishna Sevashrama. Contai (Midnapur)	2	Primary education and vocational training is given in the Ashrama.
4	Ramakrishna Math and Matri Mandir, Jayrambati (Bankura)	2	Primary education is given in the school run by the Math.
5	Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama. Sargachi (Murshidabad)	9	Secondary education with vocational training is given in the Ashrama. The boys congregate in the shrine and offer prayers morning and evening.
6	Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares.	5	Primary education is given in the Home.
7	Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal (Hardwar)	4	Primary education is given in the Sevashrama.

TABLE VIII.  
LIBRARIES AND READING ROOMS.

The following table shows the number of books in the libraries of the various institutions, at the end of the year 1925. Adjoining almost all these libraries there are Reading Rooms kept open to the public at stated hours of the day. Periodicals such as monthlies, fortnightlies, weeklies, bi-weeklies and dailies are placed in the Reading Room for the public.

Serial No	Name of Institutions.			Place.	Number of Books.
1	Ramakrishna Math	...	...	Belur (Howrah)	4,600
2	"	Free Library *	...	"	...
3	"	Vivekananda Ashrama	...	Khurut "	300
4	"	Ashrama	...	Midnapur "	200
5	"	Sevashrama	...	Tamluk (Midnapur)	150
6	"	Seva Samsad	...	Harinagar "	271
7	"	Ashrama	...	Chandipur "	...
8	"	Sevashrama	...	Conrai "	...
9	"	Math	...	Bankura	750
10	"	Math & Matri Mandir	...	Jayrambati (Bankura)	203
11	"	Mission Yogashrama	...	Koalpara "	200
12	"	Sevashrama	...	Dahar Kundu "	130
					50

\* This small library is kept open to all visitors at all hours of the day. Readers are free to use it themselves without having to get books issued by or returned to any one.

## LIBRARIES AND READING ROOMS.—C. contd.

Serial No.	Name of Institutions	Place.	Number of Books.
13	Ramakrishna Mission Orphanage	Baranagore (Calcutta)	2,000
14	" Math & Udbodhan Office	Baghbazar "	800
15	Nivedita Girls' School	"	2,000
16	Vivekananda Society	Calcutta	3,000
17	Ramakrishna Vedanta Society	"	1,100
18	" Society	Parsi Bagan	500
19	" Mission Students' Home	Calcutta	662
20	" Archanalaya	Entally	2,000
21	Gadadhar Ashrama	Bhowanipore	600
22	Ramakrishna Mandap	Chetla (Alipore)	100
23	"	Sarisha (Diamond Harbour)	700
24	"	Sargachhi (Murshidabad)	2,500
25	" Seva Samity	Malda	187
26	" Ashrama	Dinajpore	145
27	"	Mymensing	300
28	" Mission Branch	Dacca	2,500
29	" Sevashrama	Narayanganj (Dacca)	2,500
30	" "	Sonargaon	480
31	" "	Baliati	331
32	" Seva Samity	Kalma	173
33	" Sevashrama	Dupiara	600
34	"	Rarhikhal	...

35	"	Nityananda Ashrama	...	...	150
36	"	Seva Samity	...	...	650
37	"	Ashrama	...	...	175
38	"	Shanti Ashrama	...	...	800
39	"	Sadhan Mandir	...	...	150
40	"	Sevashrama	...	...	150
41	"	"	...	...	500
42	"	Ramakrishna Ashrama	...	...	165
43	"	Sevashrama	...	...	150
44	"	Seva Samity	...	...	200
45	"	"	...	...	587
46	"	"	...	...	452
47	"	"	...	...	425
48	"	"	...	...	200
49	"	"	...	...	600
50	"	Ashrama	...	...	198
51	"	Mission Society	...	...	2,000
52	"	Ashrama	...	...	1,000
53	"	Mission Vidyapith	...	...	600
54	"	Vivekananda Society	...	...	751
55	"	Ramakrishna Samity	...	...	50
56	"	Math	...	...	200
57	"	Advaita Ashrama	...	...	3,000
58	"	Mission Home of Service	...	...	1,815
59	"	Vivekananda Mandir	...	...	300
60	"	Mission Sevashrama	...	...	500
61	"	Sevashrama	...	...	50
62	"	Mission Sevashrama	...	...	1,775
63	"	Kutir	...	...	400
64	"	Vivekananda Ashrama	...	...	550

Serial No.	Name of Institutions.	Place.	Number of Books.
65	Advaita Ashrama	"	2,500
66	Ramakrishna Tapovan Ashrama	Mayavati Dharchula Bombay Mysore Bangalore Madras	125 500 250 750 1,200 4,200
67	"	"	...
68	"	"	...
69	"	"	...
70	"	"	...
71	" Mission Students' Home & Residential School	" Nattrampalli (N. Arcot)	2,000 300
72	Ramakrishna Math	"	...

There are, besides, a few other libraries and reading rooms at the following institutions which are not included in the above table as the number of books they contain is not given in the reports.

1	Ramakrishna Math & Sevashrama	Allahabad (U. P.)
2	" Mission	Brindaban (U. P.)
3	" Ashrama	Jamtara (S. P.)
4	" Sevashrama & Saradapith	Garbeta (Midnapur)
5	"	Gauhati (Assam)
6	" Dharmashrama	Trichur (Cochin)
7	" Ashrama	Batticaloa (Ceylon)
8	" Society Anath Bhandar	Bowbazar (Calcutta)

### **3. MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES**

The Missionary Work of the Ramakrishna Mission consists mainly in popularising the teachings of the scriptures and the Vedanta, in disseminating the ideas and ideals it stands for and in organising societies and associations in various parts of the country with a view to creating a lively interest in those ideals among people of all classes and stations in life. The media through which the Mission seeks to carry on such propaganda may be briefly stated thus :—

- (i) Regular, periodical and occasional classes, discourses and lectures at various centres and preaching tours through different parts of the country.
- (ii) Celebration of Birthday Anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and other such festivals, during which big congregations assemble affording opportunities to spread among them the teachings of the Master and his Apostle.
- (iii) Publication of journals, books and pamphlets sometimes for free distribution during festivals and other occasions.

The Anniversaries and other celebrations as also regular classes and occasional discourses constitute normal activities, in the programme of nearly all the institutions represented here, especially all those that go by the name of Ashramas or Maths. Only those prominent amongst them are named below :

#### **PROMINENT CENTRES OF MISSIONARY WORK IN INDIA AND CEYLON.**

##### **1. RAMAKRISHNA MATH, BELUR (HOWRAH).**

Sannyasins of the Math are from time to time invited by various societies and institutions in Calcutta and other parts of the country to deliver lectures and hold discourses. Also regular conversational Classes on different scriptural subjects, on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna

and Swami Vivekananda and on those of seers and prophets of other ages and countries are held at the Math at certain fixed hours of the day and at night, which though primarily meant for the members of the Order are open to the public as well.

#### 2. RAMAKRISHNA MATH, BAGHBAZAR (CALCUTTA).

Regular conversational discourses are given every evening and classes are also held occasionally.

#### 3. GADADHAR ASHRAMA, BHOWANIPORE (CALCUTTA).

Regular classes on the Hindu scriptures, etc., are held, which remain open to the public. The Swami in charge also sometimes goes out to hold discourses on invitation.

#### 4. RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA SOCIETY (CALCUTTA).

Weekly class-talks and occasional lectures are given by Swami Abhedananda, the President of the Society, which is a separately registered independent institution, though working along the line laid down by the Ramakrishna Mission. The Swami also sometimes goes out on lecturing tours.

The Society has also published some books by Swami Abhedananda.

#### 5. RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION BRANCH CENTRE (DACCA).

Besides regular classes and occasional lectures and discourses etc., this centre has also published up till now some eight books, two of which are on Elementary Engineering and Carpentry in Bengali.

#### 6. RAMAKRISHNA MATH, BHUBANESWAR (PURÍ).

This Math has brought out the first of a contemplated series of publications in Oriya, which are meant to be translations from the current literature of the Order.

#### 7. RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, MORADPORE (PATNA).

In addition to classes, occasional lectures and discourses are given; this centre has also published a couple of books.

#### 8. RAMAKRISHNA ADVAITA ASHRAMA (BENARES).

Regular scripture classes are held; occasional class-talks and lectures are given sometimes by eminent scholars and Pundits.

#### 9. RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND THE RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA MANDIR (ALLAHABAD).

Swami Vijnanananda, the President of this centre, gives occasional discourses on religious topics. Regular sittings are held and occasional lectures are also given in the premises of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda

Mandir. The Ashrama has brought out a "Life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna" in Hindi.

#### 10. RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA (BOMBAY).

Regular classes and lectures in different parts of the city and the province form the chief items at present in the programme of its missionary activities.

#### 11. RAMAKRISHNA MATH (MADRAS).

Classes, lectures and discourses are held in and outside the Math. The preaching activities of this centre extend beyond the Madras Presidency. The Ramakrishna Society of Rangoon and the Ashrama at Kuala Lumpur, F. M. S., the three Ashramas in Ceylon, a couple of them in the Presidency itself and the Ashrama at Bombay owe their existence to the activities of Swami Ramakrishnananda and Swami Sharvananda from this centre.

#### 12. RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA (MYSORE).

Periodical classes and discourses are held in and outside the Ashrama.

#### 13. RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA (BANGALORE).

Swami Nirmalananda, the President of the Math, has since 1910 been making extensive preaching tours in different parts of Malabar, Cochin, Travancore and other places, which have been in many cases greatly successful. For evidently under the influence of his personality a number of educated young men of the Province have already joined the Order and as a result of his activities in the course of the last few years eight permanent Ashramas have been established at different places there, one of which has already pushed itself to the forefront as a powerful publication centre in Malabar.

#### 14. RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA (TRINCOMALIE).

The two other centres in Ceylon, one at Jaffna and the other at Batticaloa have also extensive Missionary activities.

### MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

Activities of the Ramakrishna Mission in foreign lands consist mainly in propagating the universal truths of the Vedanta—the epitome of Religion and Philosophy—in the light of the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and in upholding the culture and civilisation of the East.

Work carried on from these foreign centres includes as a rule :—

- (i) Regular Sunday lectures morning and evening; weekly and sometimes bi-weekly classes on fixed days and at stated hours.
- (ii) Occasional lectures in and outside the cities they are situated in, at the invitation of churches, universities, other societies, associations and clubs; periodical lecture tours through different parts of the United States and Europe.
- (iii) Publication of journals, books, etc. on Indian culture and philosophy and on Comparative Religions.
- (iv) Libraries kept open for the members and the general public at fixed hours of the day.

The Societies also hold special services and lectures during Christmas, Easter, and such other occasions both Christian and Hindu.

Besides, individual spiritual instructions and guidance to earnest seekers are given by the Swamis. The Societies maintain their own chapels and auditoriums for regular services. With the exception of the one newly started at Portland, Oregon, all the Societies have their own permanent residences.

1. VEDANTA SOCIETY, (72 West 34th St. :) New York, U. S. A. Preaching through lectures and classes etc.
2. HINDU TEMPLE AND VEDANTA SOCIETY, (2963 Webster St.) San Francisco, Calif. U. S. A. Preaching through lectures, classes and publications.
3. SHANTI ASHRAMA, SAN ANTON ROUTE, LIVERMORE, Calif. U. S. A. This Ashrama is a solitary retreat about a hundred miles off San Francisco, founded on the model of an Indian Ashrama, where a number of the followers and earnest students and aspirants live the life of solitude and practical spirituality.
4. VEDANTA SOCIETY, BOSTON, MASS. U. S. A. Preaching through lectures, classes and publications.
5. ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, LOS ANGELES, Calif. U. S. A. A peace retreat providing a non-sectarian place of worship and religious practices. It is an Ashrama of the ideal type and has scope for all forms of spiritual sadhana, namely, Knowledge, Love, Yoga and Karma.

Public activities of the Ashrama comprise regular services, classes and lectures. The publication department started at Boston by the Vedanta Society there has been transferred to this centre since the time of its establishment.

6. VEDANTA SOCIETY, PORTLAND, OREGON, U. S. A.  
Preaching through classes, lectures and publications.
7. RAMAKRISHNA MATH, KUALA LUMPUR, F. M. S.  
Preaching through classes, lectures and publications.

#### **IMPORTANT CENTRES FOR PUBLICATION WORK.**

1. RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND UDBODHAN OFFICE,  
BAGHBАЗАR (CALCUTTA).

This is one of the premier centres for publication work. The Bengali monthly organ of the Order "Udbodhan" is issued from here. Besides, this centre has nearly seventy books in its list of publications, (Bengali and English), nearly all of which have undergone a number of editions. Lecture tours are also occasionally undertaken. One of the monks from this centre holds regular classes on the Bhagavad Gita under the auspices of the Vivekananda Society. Occasional classes in the premises of the Math are also held.

2. RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA (PATNA).

This Ashrama in addition to organising regular and occasional classes, discourses, lecture-tours, etc., has for sometime past been regularly issuing a weekly journal, "Morning Star," and has brought out a couple of books also.

3. ADVAITA ASHRAMA (MAYAVATI).

This Ashrama, apart from being a very congenial place for one's spiritual practices situated as it is in the depths of the Himalayan solitude —has grown to be the foremost centre for the propagation of thoughts and ideas. The publications carried on by the Ashrama constitute a very powerful factor in the dissemination of the ideas and ideals of the Mission. Besides the two monthly journals—"Prabuddha Bharata" in English and "Samanway" in Hindi, the Ashrama has up-to-date published the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda in seven volumes, the Swami's Life in four volumes, a Life of Sri Ramakrishna in one volume and several other smaller works which altogether number about 34. With the gradual expansion of the publishing concern and in consequence of difficulties felt in directing it from a place like Mayavati, on an altitude of 6,800 feet above the sea-level and 36 miles off the nearest railway station, the

management have, in 1920, started a Publication Department in Calcutta. All Press work and business transactions in connection with the publications are carried on from here while the Editorial Staff is stationed at Mayavati. The Ashrama also from year to year undertakes to send some of its members on preaching-tours in different parts of the country.

#### 4. YOGANANDA ASHRAMA (ALLEPPEY).

This Ashrama is specially important as being a publishing centre on the Malabar Coast. The Ashrama conducts a monthly journal, "Prabuddha Keralam," in Malayalam. Translations of some of the Swami Vivekananda's Works and other books of the Order have also been published.

#### 5. RAMAKRISHNA MATH (MADRAS).

The Math issues two monthly journals, "Vedanta Kesari" in English and "Ramakrishna Vijayam" in Tamil. This centre has further published some books, which comprise the Works of the Swami Ramakrishnananda, and others, some English translation of scriptural texts by Swami Sharvananda and a few Tamil and Telugu translations of the Works of the Swami Vivekananda and others.

#### 6. ADVAITA ASHRAMA (BENARES).

This Ashrama has published some books on Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in Hindi.

#### 7. RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA (BANGALORE).

This Math publishes Ramakrishna literature in Kanarese. It has published a short life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, his gospel and translations of several books of Swami Vivekananda in Kanarese.

#### 8. ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA (CALIF., U. S. A.).

Publishes a Vedanta Monthly, "Message of the East" and a number of other valuable and interesting volumes on Indian culture and Philosophy by different authors prominent among whom are Swami Paramananda and Sister Devamata.

## APPENDIX I

1. The Sub-Committee for the Convention consisted of the following members and office-bearers :—

Swami Suddhananda—Chairman.	
“ Sankarananda.	
“ Karunananda.	
“ Nirvedananda—Secretary.	
Sjt. Bhupendra K. Bose—Asst. Secretary.	
“ Bhutnath Mukherji, ” ” ”	
“ Basiswar Sen ” ” ”	
Swami Kamaleswarananda.	
“ Jyotirmayananda.	
“ Atmaprakashananda.	
Sjt. Girindra Nath Sarkar.	
“ Birendra Kumar Bose.	
“ Kiran Chandra Dutta.	

2. The following members and office-bearers constituted the Reception Committee :—

Swami Saradananda, Secretary, R. K. Mission—Chairman.	Sjt. Girindra Nath Sarkar, Builder and Contractor.
“ Sudhananda, Jt. Secretary, R. K. Mission—Secretary.	Dr. Durgapada Ghosh, B.A., M.B.
“ Nirvedananda—Asst. Secy. Vijoyananda ” ”	Shyamapada Mukherji, M.B.
Sjt. Basiswar Sen ” ”	Sjt. Bhupendra Kumar Bose, M.A., B.L., Vakil.
Swami Jyotirmayananda, Treasurer and Accountant.	Birendra Kumar Bose, Attorney-at-Law.
Dhirananda.	Binode Behari De.
Sankarananda.	Hrishikesh Mukherji.
Atmaprakashananda.	Kalibhusan Sen, Kaviraj.
Dharmananda.	Jatindra Krishna Dutta.
Amalananda.	Narayan Chandra Rudra.
Yajneshananda.	Bhuban Mohan Das.
Santoshananda.	Bhushan Chandra Pal.
Kamaleswarananda.	Satyesh Chandra Mitra.
Atmabodhananda.	Anathnath Mukherji.
Ganeshananda.	Suprakash Chakravarty,
Karunananda.	Dentist.
Umananda.	Kiran Chandra Dutta.
Amriteswarananda.	Bhutnath Mukherji, Registered Auditor.
Gangeshananda.	Anath Nath Bose.
Amritananda.	Manmatha Kumar Sen.
Satyanaanda.	C. K. Sarkar, B.E., Consulting Engineer.
Tripuranaanda.	Jatindra Nath Bose,
Samvidananda.	Attorney-at-Law.
Brahmachari Ganendranath, Anagha Chaitanya.	“ Durga Charan Banerji,
Sjt. Bijoy Krishna Bose, M.A., B.L., Vakil, M. L. C.	Attorney-at-Law.
	Rai Sahib Nibaran Chandra Mukherji.

3. The following representatives were elected to form the Subjects Committee.

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Swami Paramananda.              | 14. Swami Nikhilananda.  |
| 2. " Bhumananda.                   | 15. Sjt. Indradayal Bhattacharya.  |
| 3. " Kalikananda.                  |  |
| 4. Brahmachari Ganendranath.       |  |
| 5. Swami Yatiswarananda.           |  |
| 6. " Satyananda.                   | Swami Ghanananda and Swami Vipulananda were subsequently co-opted to represent the works of the Ramakrishna Mission in Southern India and Ceylon respectively. |
| 7. " Atmabodhananda.               | Besides, the members of the Governing Body of the Mission were requested to attend the meetings of the Subjects Committee as ex-officio members.               |
| 8. " Dayananda.                    |  |
| 9. " Vasudevananda.                |  |
| 10. " Nirvedananda.                |  |
| 11. " Jnaneswarananda.             |  |
| 12. " Omkarananda.                 |  |
| 13. Brahmachari Pavitra Chaitanya. |  |

## APPENDIX II.

### CLASSIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONS REPRESENTED AT THE R. K. MATH AND MISSION CONVENTION, 1926.\*

#### GROUP I.

	Name of Institutions.	Place.
1.	The Ramakrishna Math Head Quarters (Belur Math).	Belur, Howrah.
2.	The Ramakrishna Math ...	Ramna, Dacca.
3.	The Ramakrishna Math ...	Baliati, Dacca.
4.	The Ramakrishna Math ...	Sonargaon, Dacca.
5.	The Ramakrishna Yogi-ashrama.	Koalpara, Bankura.
6.	The Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama.	Laksha, Benares.
7.	The Ramakrishna Math ...	Bhubaneswar, Puri.
8.	The Ramakrishna Math ...	Nettrampalli, North Arcot.
9.	The Ramakrishna Math and Udbodhen Office.	Baghbazar, Calcutta.
10.	The Ramakrishna Matri Mandir.	Jairambati, Bankura.
11.	The Gadadhar Ashrama ...	Bhowanipore, Calcutta.
12.	The Ramakrishna Ashrama ...	Jamtara, Sonthal Parganas.
13.	The Ramakrishna Kutir ...	Almora.
14.	The Ramakrishna Math ...	Bombay.
15.	The Ramakrishna Math ...	Madras.
16.	The Ramakrishna Ashrama ...	Kishanpur, Dehradun.
17.	The Ramakrishna Ashrama ...	Bangalore.
18.	The Ramakrishna Ashrama ...	Chandipore, Midnapore.
19.	The Ramakrishna Ashrama ...	Trivandrum, Travancore.
20.	The Yogananda Ashrama ...	Alleppey, Travancore.
21.	The Ramakrishna Ashrama ...	Haripad, Travancore.
22.	The Ramakrishna Mandiram ...	Tiruvellai, Travancore.
23.	The Premananda Ashrama ...	Muttom, Travancore.
24.	The Ramakrishna Ashrama ...	Quilandy, N. Malabar.
25.	The Niranjanashrama ...	Ottappalam, S. Malabar.

#### GROUP II.

1.	The Ramakrishna Mission Head Quarters.	Belur, Howrah.
2.	The Ramakrishna Mission Charitable Dispensary.	Belurmath, Howrah.

\* Readers are referred to Pp. 237—239.

3.	The Ramakrishna Mission Industrial School.	Belurmath, Howrah.
4.	The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home.	Calcutta.
5.	The Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Industrial and Residential Schools.	Mylapore, Madras.
6.	The R. K. M. Sister Nivedita Girls' School.	Baghbazar, Calcutta.
7.	The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama.	
8.	The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashtama.	Lucknow.
9.	The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama.	Narayanganj, Dacca.
10.	The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama.	Baliati, Dacca.
11.	The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama.	Kankhal, Hardwar.
12.	The Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith.	Deoghar, Sonthal Parganas.
13.	The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama.	Rangoon, Burma.
14.	The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama.	Brindaban.
15.	The Ramakrishna Mission Orphanage.	Baranagore.
16.	The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama. (Orphanage).	Sargachi, Murshidabad.
17.	The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama.	Koalpara, Bankura.
18.	The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama.	Sarisha, Diamond Harbour.
19.	The Ramakrishna Mission ...	Bhubaneswar, Puri.
20.	The Ramakrishna Mission ...	Barisal.
21.	The Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service.	Laksha, Benares.
22.	The Ramakrishna Mission Seva Samity.	Sylhet.
23.	The Ramakrishna Mission Seva Samity.	Habiganj, Sylhet.
24.	The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama.	Bharukati, Narayanpur, Barisal.
25.	The Ramakrishna Mission ...	Ramna, Dacca.
26.	The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama.	Sonargaon, Dacca.

## GROUP III.

1. The Vedanta Society	San Francisco, U. S. A.
2. The Vedanta Society	New York.
3. The Vedanta Centre	Boston.
4. The Ananda Ashrama	La Crescenta.
5. The Shanti Ashrama	Livermore, Calif.
6. The Vedanta Society	Portland, Oregon.
7. The Advaita Ashrama and Branch.	Mayavati and Calcutta.
The Ramakrishna Ashrama	Moradpore, Patna.
9. The Ramakrishna Ashrama	Mymensing.
10. The Ramakrishna Math	Kuala-Lumpur, F. M. S.
11. The Ramakrishna Math	Allahabad.
12. The Ramakrishna Ashrama	Mysore.
The Ramakrishna Ashrama	Bankura.

## GROUP III. (b).

The Ramakrishna Seva Samity	Malda
The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Bankura
The Ramakrishna Sarada Pith	Garbeta, Midnapore
The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Contai, Midnapore.

## GROUP IV.

1. The Ramakrishna Math ...	Nazarganj, Midnapore
2. The Ramakrishna Seva Sangsad	Harinagar, "
3. The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Dishong Shella, Khashia Hills
4. The Vivekananda Ashrama ...	Shamlatal, Almora
5. The Ramakrishna Society ...	Rangoon, Burma
6. The Ramakrishna Seva Sadan	Salke, Howrah
7. The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Arraria, Purnea
8. The Ramakrishna Ashrama ...	Hajiganj, Tipperah

## GROUP V.

1. The Ramakrishna Ashram ...	Dinajpore.
2. The Ramakrishna Seva Samity*	Sylhet.
3. The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Hajiganj, Tipperah.
4. The Ramakrishna Society ...	Parsibagan, Calcutta.
5. The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Dahar Kundu, Hooghly
6. The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Ashrama.	Khurut, Howrah.
7. The Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mandir..	Allahabad.
8. Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama ...	Jaffna, Ceylon.
9. Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama ...	Trincomalie, "
10. Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama ...	Batticaloa, "
11. The Ramakrishna Sadhan Mandir.	Chandpur, Tipperah
12. The Ramakrishna Seva Samity	Silchar, Cachar.

	The Ramakrishna Society Anath Bhandar.	Bowbazar, Calcutta.
14.	The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Asansol, Burdwan.
15.	The Ramakrishna Tapovan ...	Dharchula, Almora.
16.	The Vivekananda Society ...	78/1 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta.
17.	The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Faridpore.
18.	The Ramakrishna Ashrama ...	Salem.
19.	The Ramakrishna Seva Samity	Kalma, Dacca.
20.	The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Society.	Baghbazar, Calcutta.
21.	The Ramakrishna Ashrama ...	Tanaltala, Noakhali.
22.	The Ramakrishna Seva Sadan	Cawnpore.
	The Ramakrisna Mandap ...	Chetla, Alipore.

## GROUP VI.

1.	The Ramakrishna Seva Samity	Panchakhanda, Sylhet.
2.	The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Gowpara, Dacca.
3.	The Ramakrishna Ashrama ...	Kunda, Deoghar.
4.	The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Chittagong.
5.	The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Jharia, Manbhum.
6.	The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Gauhati, Assam.
7.	The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Midnapore.
8.	The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Rarbikhal, Dacca.
9.	The Ramakrishna Ashrama ...	Debhog, Faridpore.
10.	The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Cave.	
11.	The Ramakrishna—Nityananda Ashrama.	Narottampore, Barisal.
12.	The Ramakrishna Sevak Samity	Sambalpore, C. P.
13.	The Ramakrisshna Sevashrama	Ramganj, Noakhali.
14.	The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Duptara, Dacca.
15.	The Vivekananda Society* ...	Jamshedpore.
16.	The Ramakrishna Dharmasrama	Trichur, Cochin.
17.	The Ramakrishna Vedanta Society.	40, Beadon St., Calcutta.
18.	The Ramakrishna Sevak Sam- pradaya.	Cuttack, Orissa.
19.	The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Ghatal, Midnapore.
20.	The Ramakrishna Sevashrama	Tamluk,
21.	The Ramakrishna Shanti Ashrama.	Jandi, Faridpore.
22.	The Ramakrishna Seva Samity	Faridpore,

\* Since affiliated.

**APPENDIX III.**  
**REPRESENTED INSTITUTIONS GROUPED UNDER PROVINCES & DISTRICTS.**

No.	Province.	District.	Name of Institutions.	Place.	Year of inception.
A	Bengal	Howrah	Ramakrishna Math & Mission Hd. Quarters* ...	Belur	1886
	"	"	Ramakrishna " Charitable Dis-	Belur	...
	"	"	pensary " " ...	Math	1912
	"	"	Nivedita Girls' School (Branch) ...	Bally	...
	"	"	Ramakrishna Vivekananda Ashram ...	Khurut	1915
	"	"	" Mission Industrial School ...	Industrial	1916
B	"	"	Ramakrishna Seva Sadan ...	Saldia	1921
	"	"	Sevashrama ... "	Ghatal Contai	1924
1	"	Midnapur...	..."	...	1910
2	"	"	"	...	1913

\* The inception of this Monastic Institution dates back to the year 1886, soon after the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna though the final establishment of the Monastery on its present site at Belur (Howrah) took place in the year 1899, after the Swami Vivekananda's return from the West in 1897.

## REPRESENTED INSTITUTIONS GROUPED UNDER PROVINCES &amp; DISTRICTS.—(Contd.)

No.	Province.	District.	Name of Institutions.	Place.	Year of inception.
M					
1	"	"	Tipperah	...	
2	"	"	"	... Nivedita Girls' School (Branch)	1919
3	"	"	"	... Ramakrishna Sevashrama	1920
	"	"	"	... Sadhan Mandir	1922
N					
1	"	"	Dacca	...	
2	"	"	"	... Ramakrishna Math & Mission Branch	1899
3	"	"	"	... Mission Sevashrama	1911
	"	"	"	... Math & Mission Seva ashrama.	1912
4	"	"	"	... Ramakrishna Seva Samiti	
5	"	"	"	... Sevashrama	1913
6	"	"	"	... Math & Mission Seva ashrama.	1914
7	"	"	"	... Ramakrishna Sevashrama	1915
8	"	"	"	... Sevashrama	1920
O					
1	"	"	Faridpur	...	
2	"	"	"	... Shanti Ashrama	1918
	"	"	"	... Seva Samiti	1921
	"	"	"	... Faridpur	...



REPRESENTED INSTITUTIONS GROUPED UNDER PROVINCES & DISTRICTS.—(Contd.).

D	"	"	"	"	Lucknow	...	...	Mission Sevashrama...	Lucknow	...	...	1914
E	"	"	"	"	Mutra	...	...	"	Brindaban	...	...	1907
E	"	"	"	"	Saharanpur	...	...	"	Kankhal	...	...	1901
G	"	"	"	"	Dehra-Dun	...	...	Ashrama Sadhan Kutir	Kishanpur	...	...	1915
H	"	"	"	"	Almora	...	...	Adwaita Ashrama	...	...	...	1899
1	"	"	"	"	"	...	...	Vivekananda Ashrama	...	...	...	1915
2	"	"	"	"	"	...	...	Ramakrishna Kutir	...	...	...	1916
3	"	"	"	"	"	...	...	"	Almora	...	...	1925
4	"	"	"	"	"	...	...	Tapovan	Dharchula	...	...	1925
A	Bombay Presidency	City of Bombay	...	...	Ashrama	...	...	Bombay	...	...	...	1923
A	Madras Presidency	Madras Town	...	...	Math & Mission Branch Mission Students'	...	...	Madras	...	...	...	1897
B	"	"	...	...	Home & Residential School.	...	...	"	...	...	...	1905
C	"	"	"	"	Ramakrishna Math	...	...	Nattrampalli	...	...	...	1912
D	"	"	"	"	North Arcot	...	...	Quilandy	...	...	...	1915
E	"	"	"	"	North Malabar,	...	...	Ottapalam	...	...	...	1925
E	"	"	"	"	South Malabar	...	...	Travancore State	...	...	...	1924
1	"	"	"	"	Travancore State	...	...	Ashrama	...	...	...	1912
2	"	"	"	"	"	..."	..."	Ashrama	Tiruvella	...	...	1912
3	"	"	"	"	"	..."	..."	Brahmananda Ashrama	Trivandrum	...	...	1910
4	"	"	"	"	"	..."	..."	Yogananda Ashrama	Allerpey	...	...	1924
	"	"	"	"	"	..."	..."	Ramakrishna Ashrama	Mutiyam	...	...	1924

## REPRESENTED INSTITUTIONS GROUPED UNDER PROVINCES &amp; DISTRICTS.—(Contd.)

No.	Province.	District.	Name of Institutions.	Place.	Year of Inception.
F	Madras Presidency	Cochin State	...	Dharmashrama	Trichur ...
A	"	Mysore State	..."	"	Bangalore City ...
B	"	"	"	"	Mysore ...
A	Ceylon	...	...	Math ...	Jaffna ...
1	"	...	"	Ashrama	Trincomalee ...
2	"	...	"	"	Batticaloa ...
3	"	...	"	"	"
A	Burma	...	Rangoon	Mission Society	Rangoon ...
1	"	...	"	"	1910 ...
2	"	...	"	"	1921 ...
Federated States	Malay	Kuala-Lumpur	Math	Kuala-Lumpur	1918 ...
A	U. S. of America	California State	Hindu Temple & Vedanta Society	San-Francisco ...	1899 ...
1	"	"	Shanti Ashrama	San Anthone Valley	1900
2	"	"	"	"	"

3	"	"	"	"	Ananda Ashrama	...	...	...	La Crescenta	...	1923
B	"	"	"	New York State	...	Vedanta Society	...	...	New York	...	1894
C	"	"	"	Massachusetts	...	"	"	...	Boston	...	1909
D	"	"	"	Oregon State	...	"	"	...	Portland	...	1925

The following institutions have been started since the convention.

A	Madras Presidency	Ootacamund	...	Ramakrishna Math	...	...	...	Ootacamund	...	1926
1	Coorg	Coorg	...	"	Ashrama	...	...	Ponnampet	...	1927
2	Kathiawar	...	...	"	Math	...	...	Rajkot	...	1927
B	Punjab	Delhi	...	"	"	...	...	Delhi	...	1927
C								"		

## APPENDIX IV.

### STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE MATH AND MISSION CONVENTION.

NAME OF DONORS.		RS.	A. P.
Swami Karunananda	...	2	0 0
,, Suddhananda	...	1	0 0
,, Shyamananda	...	1	0 0
Sj. Bashishwar Sen	...	5	0 0
Br. Soma Chaitanya	...	1	0 0
Sj. Bhupendra Kr. Bose	...	5	0 0
,, Girindra Nath Sarkar	...	10	0 0
R. K. Society, Parsibagan, Calcutta	...	5	0 0
Sj. Mahesh Chandra Bhattacharjee	...	5	0 0
,, Bhupendra Kr. Bose	...	5	0 0
Through Sj. Bashishwar Sen	...	1	2 0
R. K. Mission, Belur	...	150	0 0
Sj. Nagendra Kumar Das	...	5	0 0
Mr. A. Sarkar	...	100	0 0
R. K. Mission Ashrama, Sargachi	...	1	0 0
Through Jnan Maharaj	...	1	4 9
R. K. Mission Charitable Dispensary, Belur Math	...	1	0 0
Gadadhar Ashram, Bhowanipur	...	5	0 0
R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Baliati	...	5	0 0
R. K. Ashrama, Ramganj	...	2	0 0
Sj. Bhuth Nath Mukherjee	...	10	0 0
R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban	...	10	0 0
Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bombay	...	25	0 0
,, Sevashrama, Duptara	...	5	0 0
,, Ashrama, Nattrampalli	...	10	0 0
Sj. Haran Chandra Banerjee	...	5	0 0
,, Kamakhya Nath Mitra	...	5	0 0
,, Surja Kumar Aich	...	2	0 0
Dr. Durgapada Ghosh	...	3	0 0
R. K. Ashrama, Najarganj	...	1	0 0
Sj. Sachindra Kumar Sanyal	...	100	0 0
,, Dhirendra Nath Ghosh	...	5	0 0
,, Prafulla Nath Rudra	...	5	0 0
,, Dhirendra Nath Sanyal	...	2	0 0
,, Narayan Ch. Rudra	...	1	0 0
,, Joykrishna Gupta	...	8	0 0
Carried over		<u>508</u>	<u>6 9</u>

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE MATH AND  
MISSION CONVENTION.-

NAME OF DONORS.	Brought forward	Rs.	A.	P.
Sj. Amar Nath Bhattacharjee	... 508	6	9	
,, Satish Chandra Pal	... 2	0	0	
,, Shashi Bhusan Das	... 1	0	0	
,, Bhusan Chandra Pal	... 3	0	0	
R. K. Mission Anath Ashrama, Baranagore	... 5	0	0	
Sister Nivedita Girls' School	... 5	0	0	
Dr. Charu Chandra Bose	... 25	0	0	
Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati	... 15	0	0	
Raishahib Nibaran Chandra Mukherjee	... 51	0	0	
R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Lucknow	... 10	0	0	
The Vivekananda Society, Jamshedpur	... 15	0	0	
R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Narayanganj	... 5	0	0	
Sj. Harish Chandra Das Dutta	... 15	0	0	
,, Nagendra N. Chatterjee	... 5	0	0	
R. K. Seva Samity, Karimganj	... 10	0	0	
Panchakhanda	... 5	0	0	
Sj. Manmatha Nath Chatterjee	... 1	0	0	
Hindu Temple, San Francisco, U. S. A.	... 200	0	0	
R. K. Mission Home of Service, Benares City	... 20	0	0	
,, Ashrama, Mymensing	... 10	0	0	
,, Advaita Ashrama, Benares	... 5	0	0	
,, Mission Ashrama, Sarisha	... 10	0	0	
Sj. Barada Kanta Dutta	... 2	0	0	
Bhaktas of Padupeth	... 20	0	0	
Dr. Bepin Behari Ghosh	... 15	0	0	
Sj. Lalit Mohan Dutta	... 3	0	0	
R. K. Sevashrama, Araria	... 10	0	0	
A sympathiser	... 50	0	0	
Sj. Shyam Sundar Ghosh	... 10	0	0	
,, Sarat Chandra Banerjee	... 5	0	0	
Ramakrishna Vivekananda Society, Baghbazar, Calcutta	... 5	0	0	
The Vivekananda Society, Calcutta	... 20	0	0	
Sri Ramakrishna Math, Bhubaneswar	... 5	0	0	
Sj. Binode Behari Dey, Calcutta	... 100	0	0	
,, Gopi Mohan Rai	... 20	0	0	
Matri Mandir, Jairambati	... 5	0	0	
Ramakrishna Sadhan Mandir, Chandpur	... 5	0	0	
Sj. Bhusan Chandra Pal, Calcutta	... 50	0	0	
The Women's Institute, Harinagar	... 1	0	0	
Carried over	... 1257	6	9	

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE MATH AND  
MISSION CONVENTION.—(contd.)

NAME OF DONORS.	Brought forward	Rs.	A.	P.
		2828	15	9
,, Ananda Prosad Bose	...	0	8	0
,, Bijoy K. Bose	...	0	8	0
B. B. Dutta Esq.	...	5	0	0
A. P. Bose Esq.	...	5	0	0
G. C. Dey Esq.	...	5	0	0
Dr. P. K. De	...	25	0	0
Sj. Ramkrishna Das	...	25	0	0
,, Pravat Kumar Ghosh	...	1	0	0
Ramakrishna Society, Rangoon	...	5	0	0
,, Mission Sevashrama, Rangoon	...	25	0	0
,, Sevashram, Tamluk	...	10	0	0
,, Ghatal	...	5	0	0
Sj. Prafulla Nath Rudra	...	5	0	0
,, Someswar Nag	...	5	0	0
,, Birendra Kumar Bose	...	5	0	0
,, Sarajendra K. Datta	...	10	0	0
J. N. Bose Esq.	...	50	0	0
Sj. Sudhir Chandra De	...	5	0	0
,, Bhupendra Krishna Bose	...	5	0	0
,, Manindra Krishna Sinha	...	1	0	0
,, Aswini Kumar Chakravarty	...	30	0	0
Ramakrishna Ashrama, Kalma, Dacca	...	3	0	0
Sj. Haripada Das	...	1	0	0
,, Nalini Nath Roy Chowdhury	...	3	0	0
A. Bombay Gentleman	...	2243	14	3
Sj. Suresh Chandra Das	...	1	0	0
Mrs. K. P. Mitra	...	30	0	0
Sj. Nikhileshwar Sanyal	...	50	0	0
Ramakrishna Ashrama, Gowpara, Dacca	...	4	0	0
,, Chandipur	...	10	0	0
Sj. Mani Lal Ghoshal	...	1	0	0
,, Saurjendra Nath Mazumdar	...	2	0	0
,, Radhagovinda Mallick	...	2	0	0
,, Jatindra Nath Mitra	...	2	0	0
,, Banamali Saha	...	5	0	0
,, Narendra Nath Ghosh	...	5	0	0
,, Suresh Chandra Saha	...	1	0	0
Mr. S. Sethuramu Rao	...	10	0	0
Sj. Makhan Lal Patra	...	2	0	0
Mr. P. B. Gale	...	10	0	0
	Carried over	5442	14	0

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE MATH AND  
MISSION CONVENTION.—(

NAME OF DONORS.	Brought forward	RS.	A.	P.
Sj. Sachi Nandan Dutta	... 5442 14 0			
Ramakrishna Ashrama, Kunda, Deoghar	... 4 0 0			
„ Vivekananda Suhrid Sangha Ashrama, Chittagong	... 2 0 0			
Sj. Pramatha Nath Bose	... 10 0 0			
B. D. Mukherjee Esq.	... 1 0 0			
Sj. Lalit Mohan Rai	... 10 0 0			
„ Bibhuti	... 4 0 0			
„ Hira Lal Ghosh	... 10 0 0			
„ Phanindra Nath Chatterjee	... 1 0 0			
„ Harendra Nath Nag	... 3 0 0			
Dr. Sashi Bhushan Ghosh	... 4 0 0			
A Devotee	... 1 0 0			
Sj. M. A. Sundaram Iyer	... 5 0 0			
„ Haripada Datta	... 10 0 0			
„ Akshoy Kumar Sinha	... 2 0 0			
„ Anukul Chandra Sanyal	... 2 0 0			
A Sympathiser	... 10 0 0			
Swami Srivasananda	... 198 10 0			
Through Swami Shyamananda	... 5 0 0			
Sj. Prabodh Chandra De	... 10 0 0			
„ Bhudev P. Mukherjee	... 10 0 0			
„ Shyamakanta Mukherjee	... 1 0 0			
Dr. Satya Hari Sen	... 1 0 0			
P. G. Mukherjee Esq.	... 0 8 0			
A. S. Mukherjee Esq.	... 0 8 0			
Sj. Chandra Shekhar Rudra	... 1 0 0			
„ Nripendra Nath Sahoo	... 100 0 0			
Swami Subhananda	... 2 0 0			
J. C. Bose Esq.	... 2 0 0			
R. P. Chowdhury Esq.	... 3 0 0			
S. Mukherjee Esq.	... 2 0 0			
Dr. Biswas	... 5 0 0			
Sj. Sumer Ch. Mehar	... 80 0 0			
Jitendra Nath Banerjea	... 1 0 0			
Advance from the R. K. Mission General Fund	... 141 14 6			
Total	... 6087 6 6			

## RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION CONVENTION 1926.

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE PERIOD JUNE, 1925 TO SEPTEMBER, 1927.

### RECEIPTS.

Donations received—

From Ashramas	1,149	1	0
From Members of the R. K. Mission	1,359	8	9
From Sympathisers	3,436	14	3
<b>Advance from the R. K. Mission General Fund</b>	<b>5,945</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>

### PAYMENTS.

Foodstuff	...	...	Rs. A.P.
Accommodation (including Bed, Light, etc.)	...	...	2,641 14 3
Salary	...	...	436 15 6
Printing Charges (Addressess, Notices, Letters etc.)	...	...	156 14 0
Stationery	...	...	...
Postage	...	...	321 3 0
Travelling Charges	...	...	...
Transit Charges (Freight etc.)	...	...	...
Misc : Charges (including presentation of Prizes and Medals)	...	...	...
Pandal	...	...	16 2 9
Convention Report (Paper, Printing Charges, Half-tone Blocks etc.)	...	...	81 6 0

<b>Total</b>	<b>Rs. 6,087 6 6</b>
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<b>Total</b>	<b>Rs. 6,087 6 6</b>
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Examined with Books and Vouchers, and found correct.

N. K. MAJUMDAR, M.A., G.D.A.,  
Government Certified Auditor,

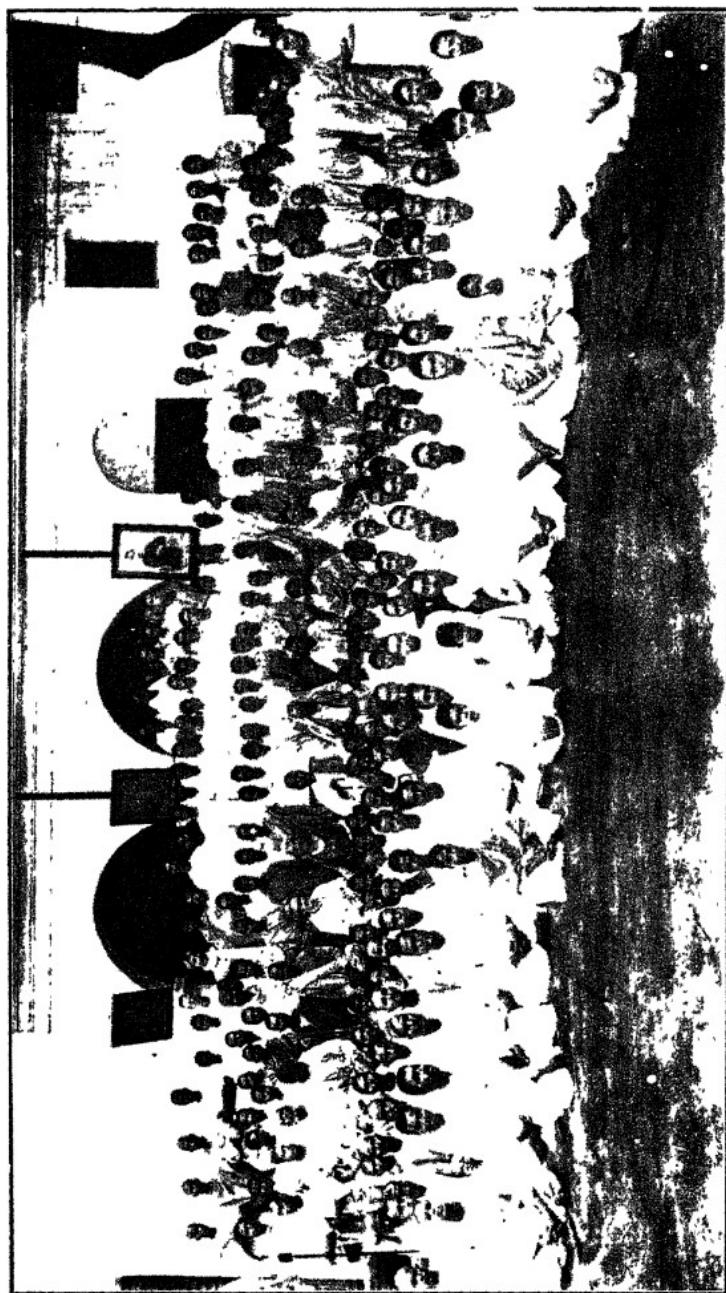
285/9, Bowbazar Street, Calcutta.  
28th September, 1927.

SUDDHANANDA,

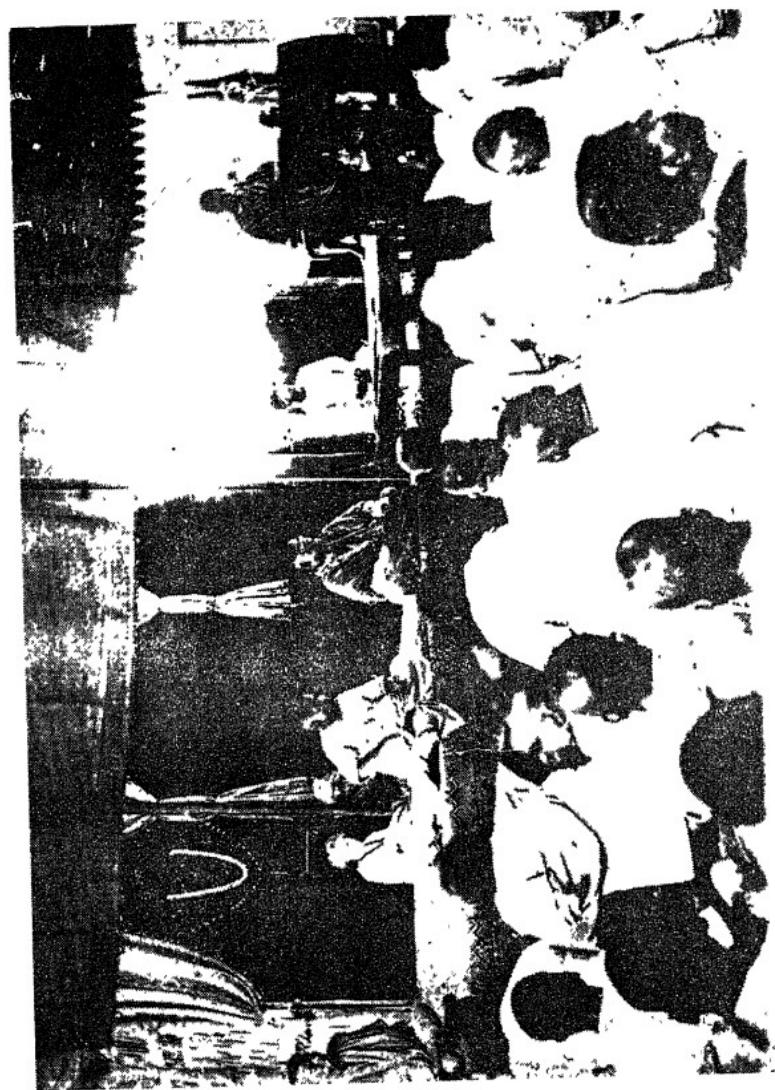
Secy. Reception Committee.



Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa



A scene at one of the Sessions of the Convention



The Convention pandal and platform.



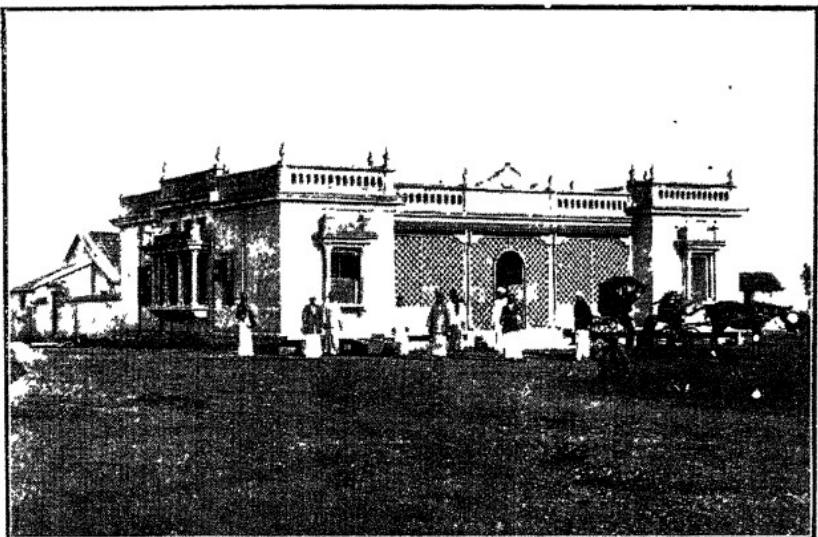
Swami Saradananda  
Chairman of the Reception Committee.



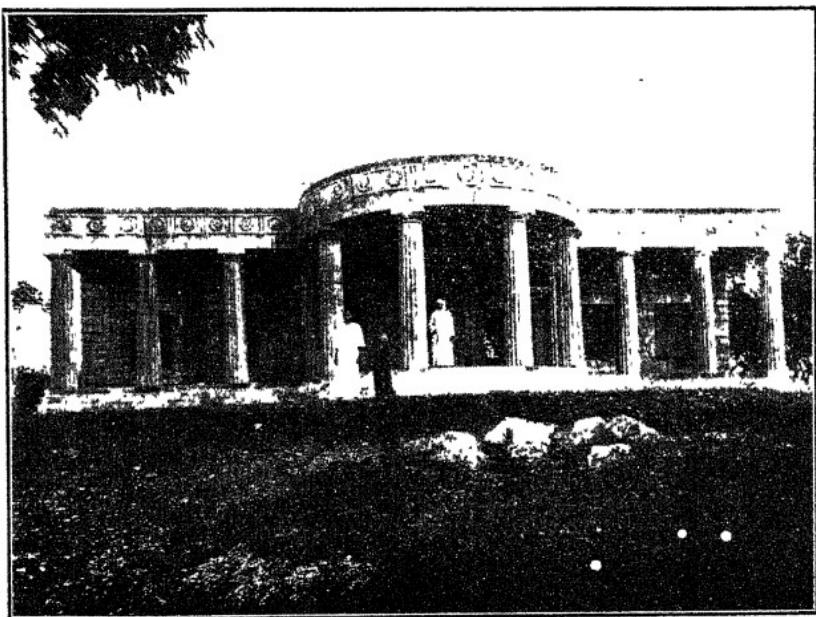
A view of the Belur Monastery situated on the right bank of the Ganges



SWAMI SUDDHANANDA,  
Secretary of the Reception Committee.



Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore.



Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trivandrum.



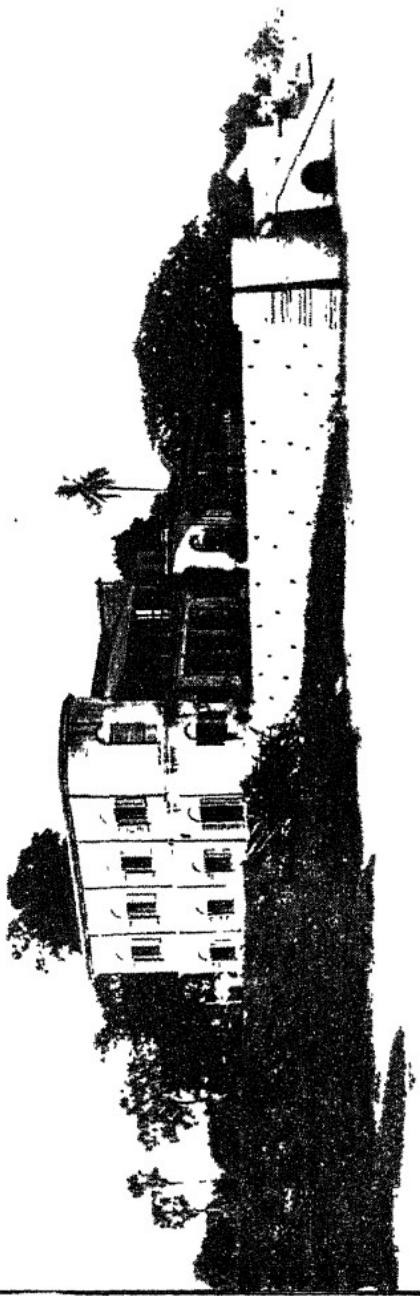
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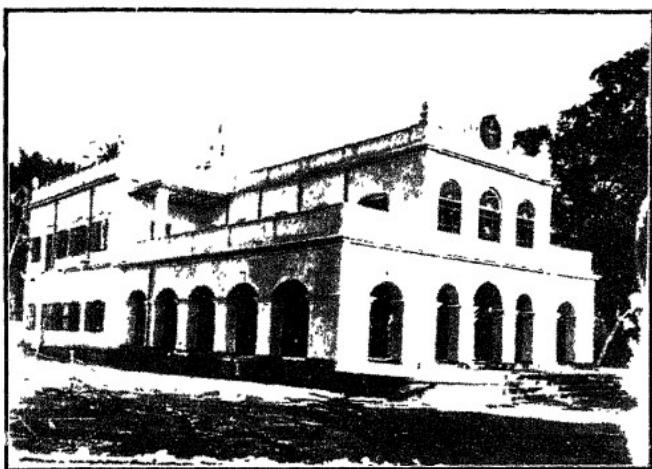


Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta (California).

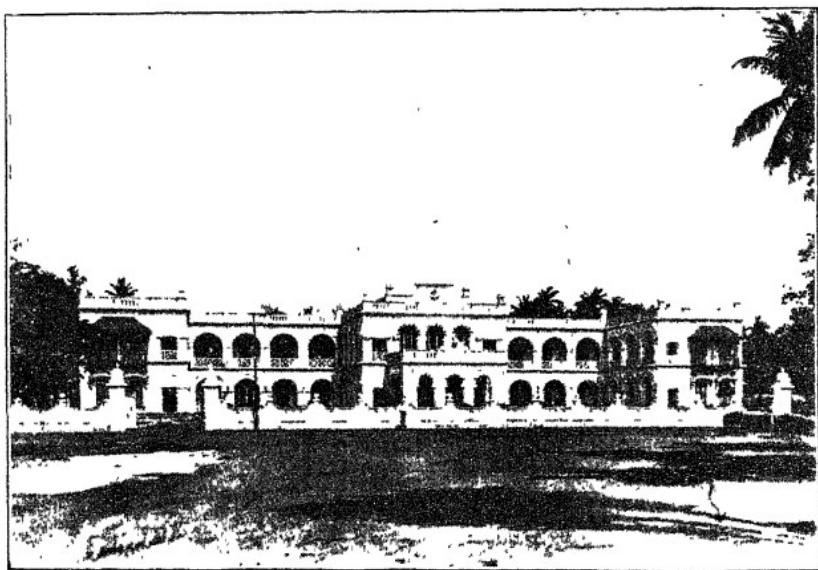


Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas

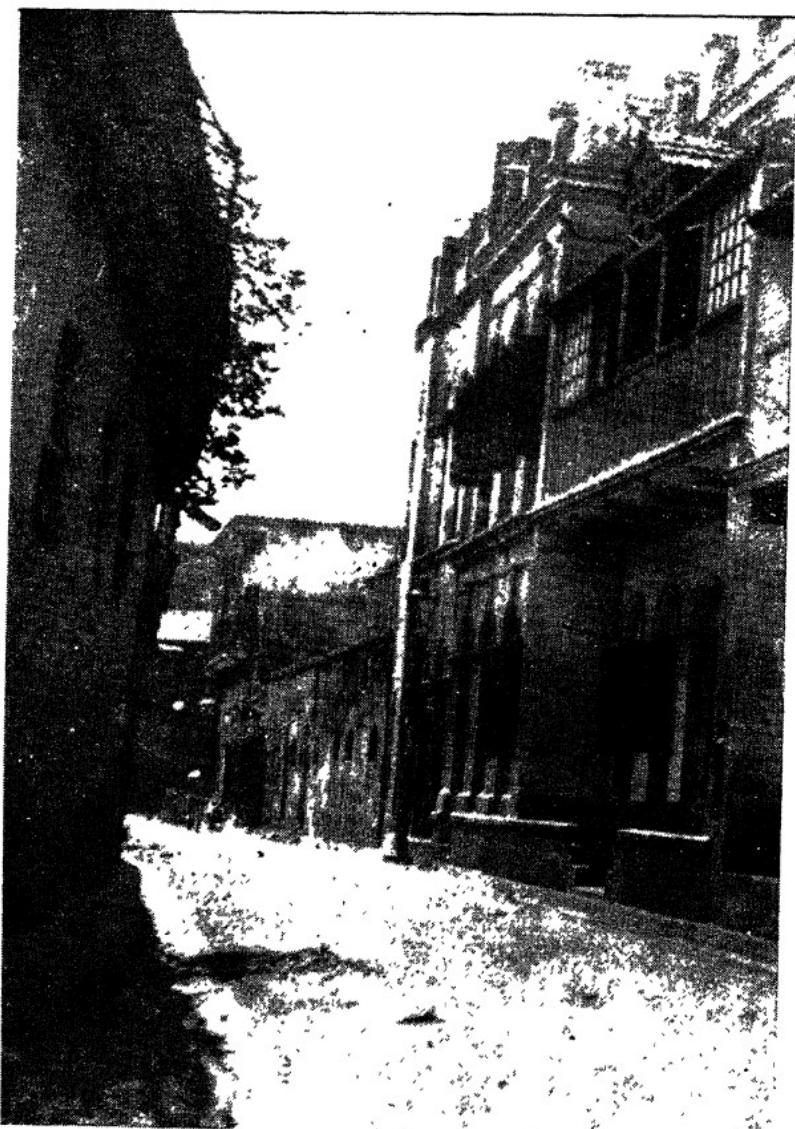




Ramakrishna Math, Madras



Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras.



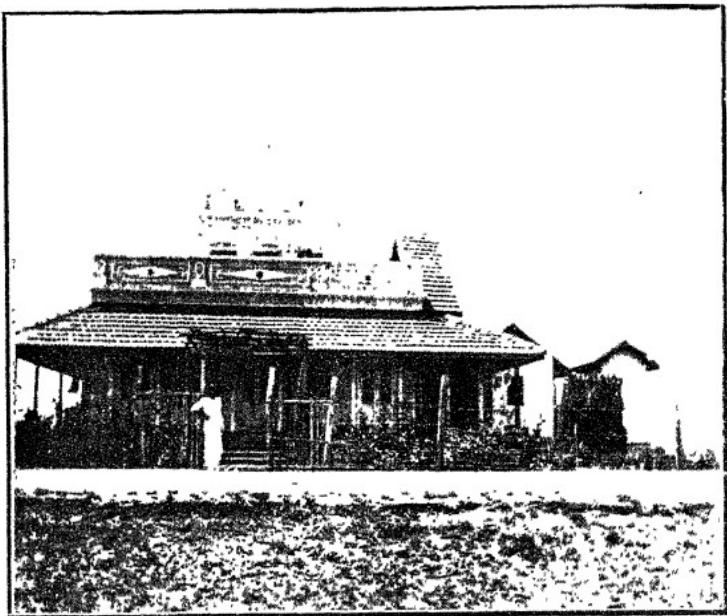
Ramakrishna Math and Udbodhan Office, Baghbazar, North Calcutta.



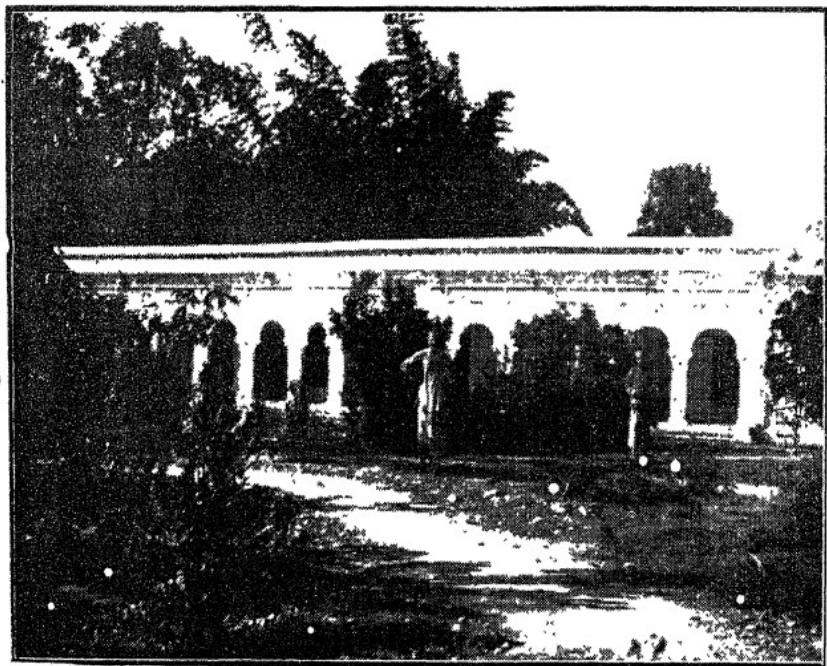
Ramakrishna Math, Bhubaneshwar.



Gadadhar Ashrama, Bhowanipur  
(South Calcutta )

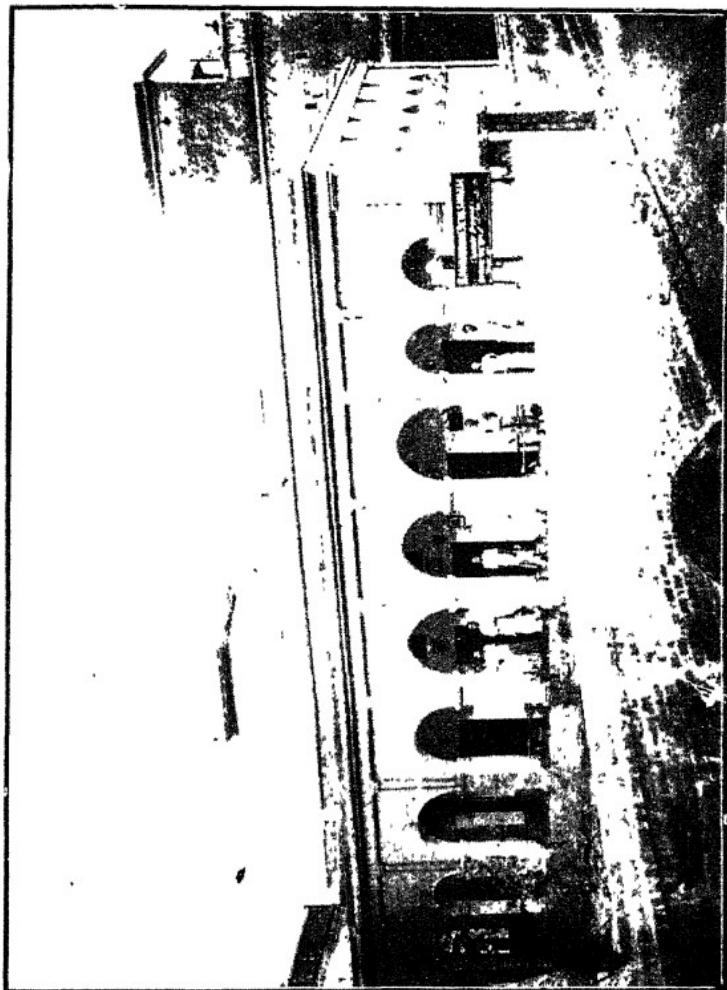


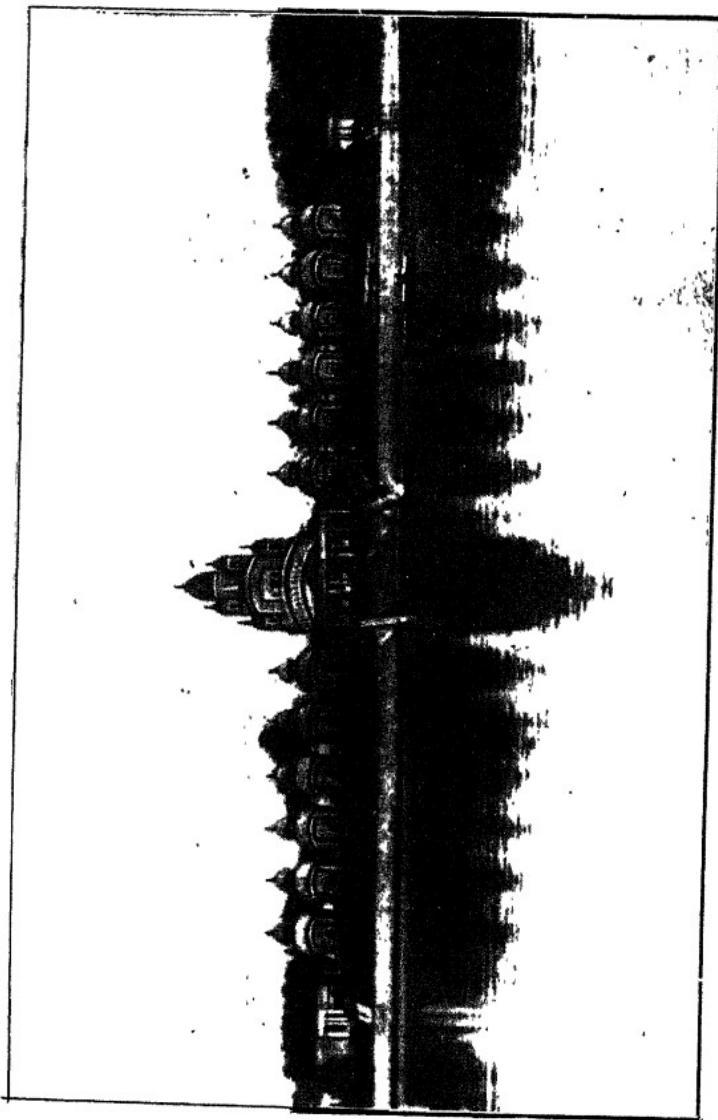
Ramakrishna Ashrama Bombay



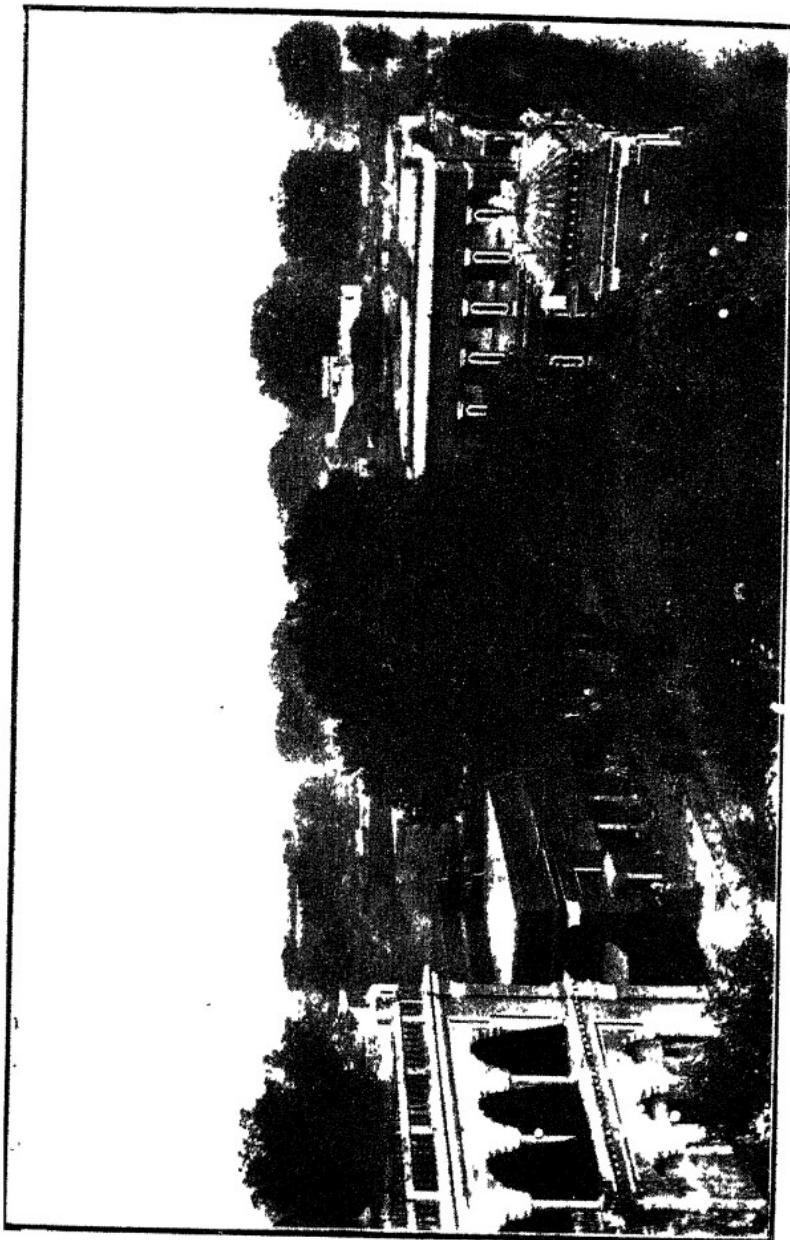
Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama Kankhal Hardwar

Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Lucknow,

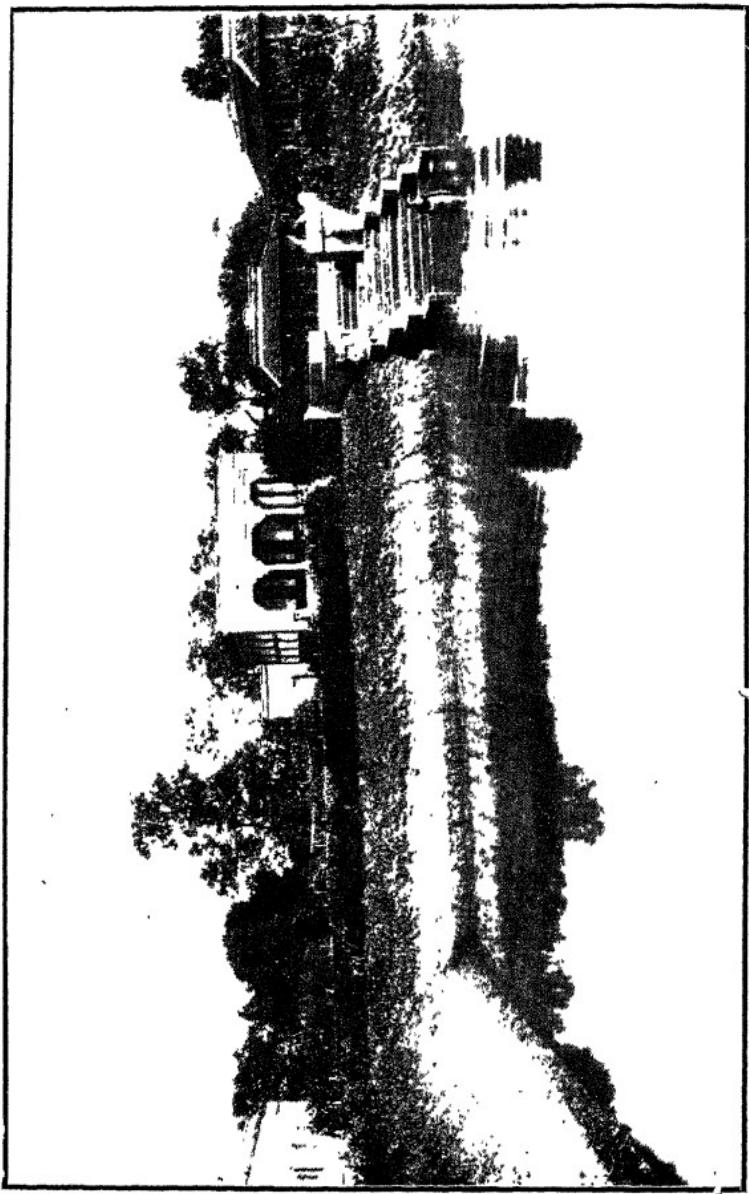




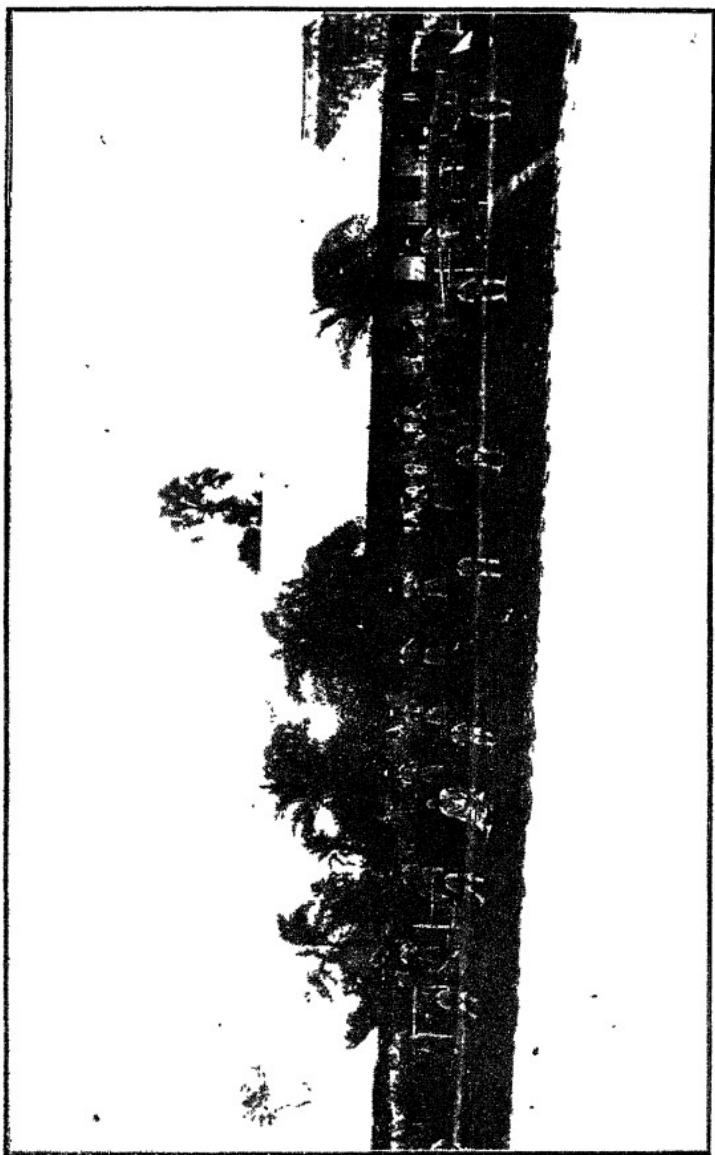
A view of the Temples of Dakshineswar situated on the left bank of the Ganges.



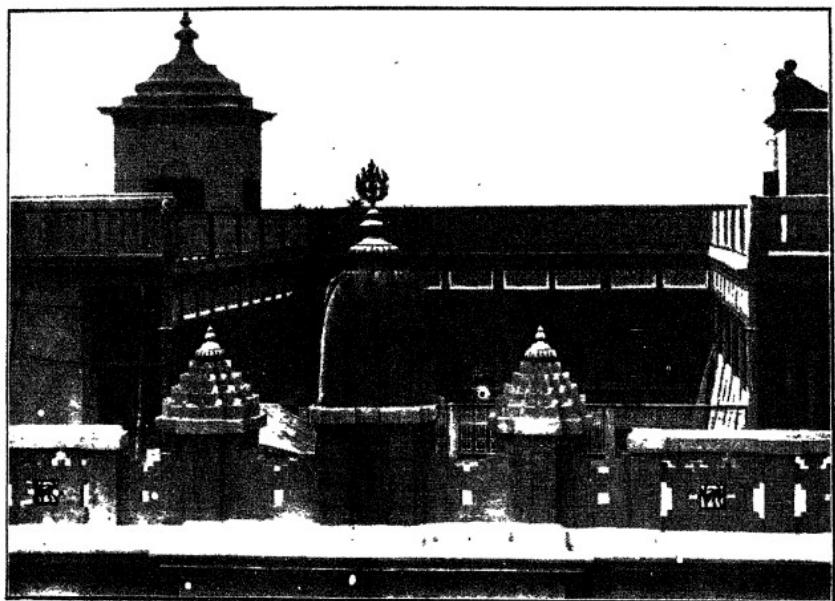
Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Benares



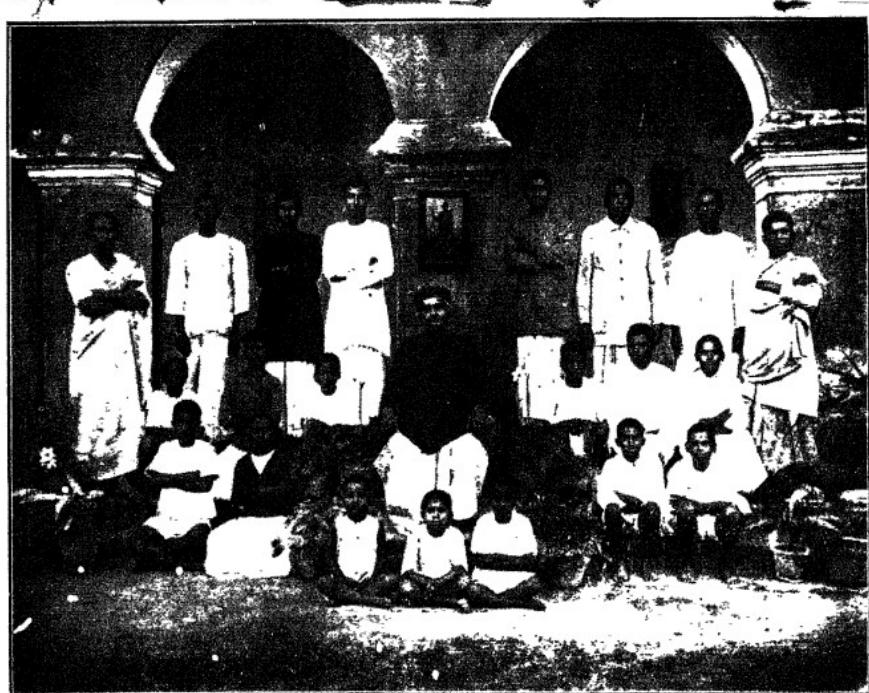
Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Dacca



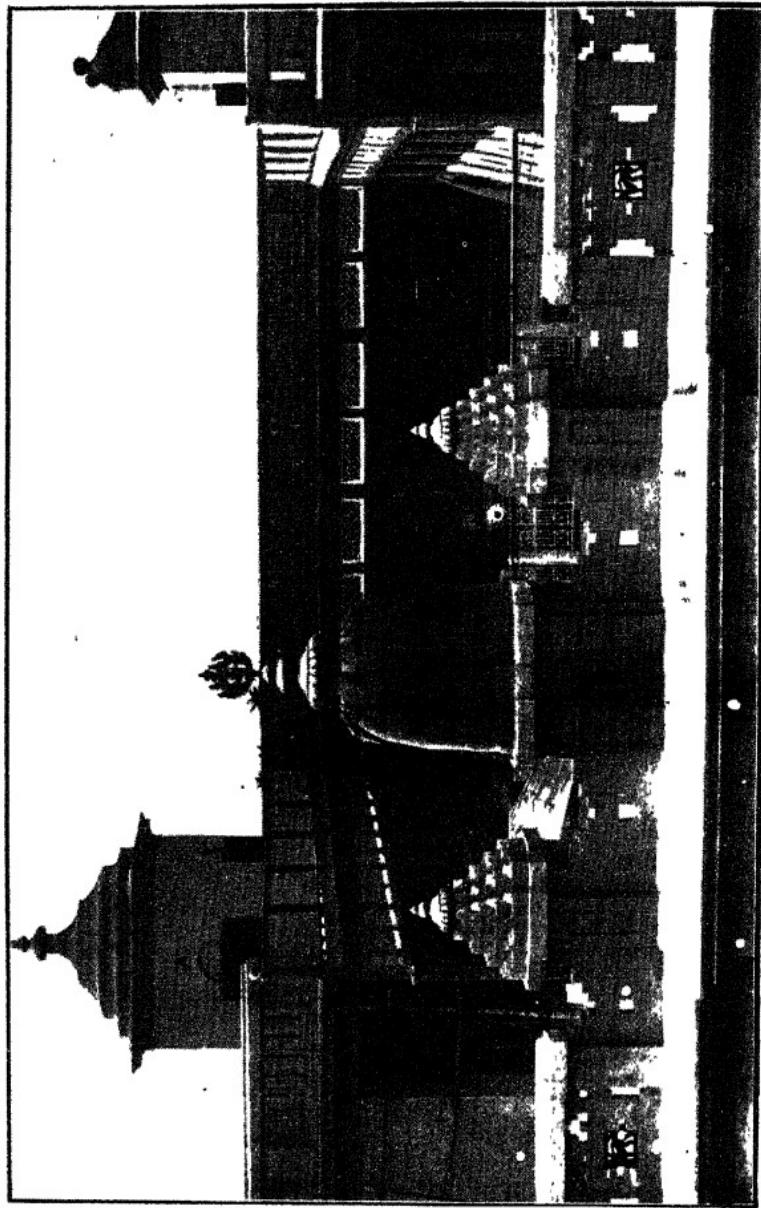
Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Sarisha (Diamond Harbour).



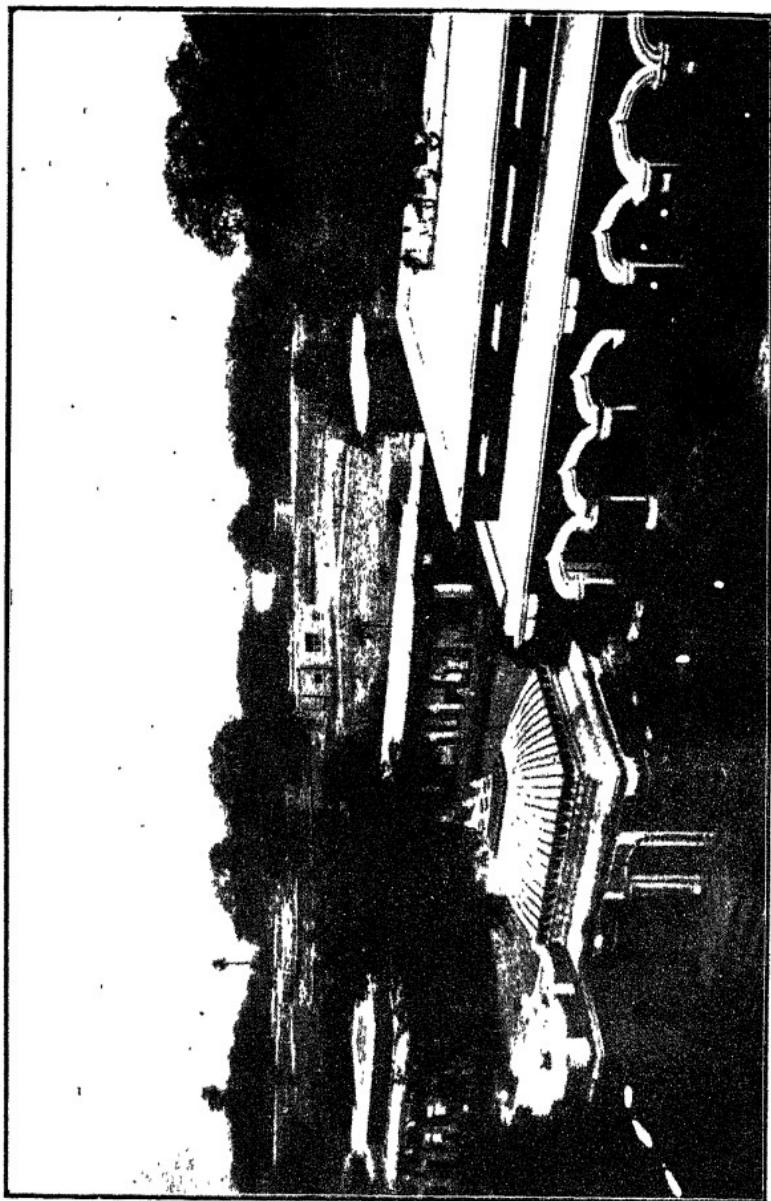
The Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Baghbazar, Calcutta. (Upper Structure).



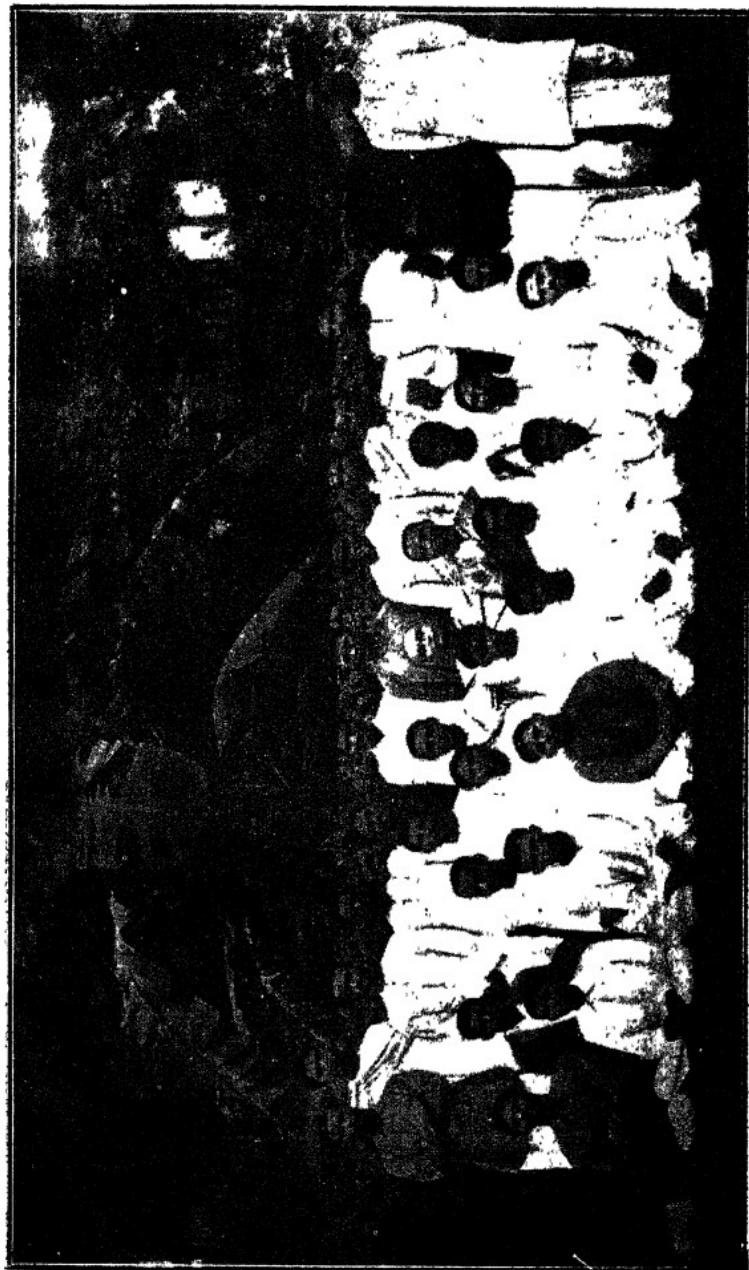
Ramakrishna Mission Orphanage, Sargachhi (Murshidabad).



The Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Baghbazar, Calcutta. (Upper Structure).

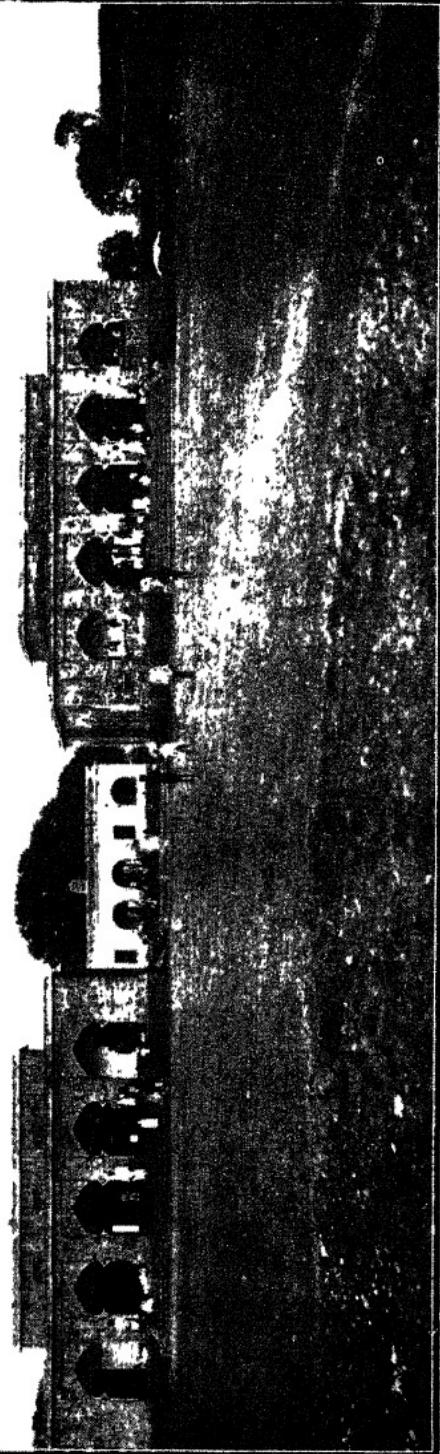


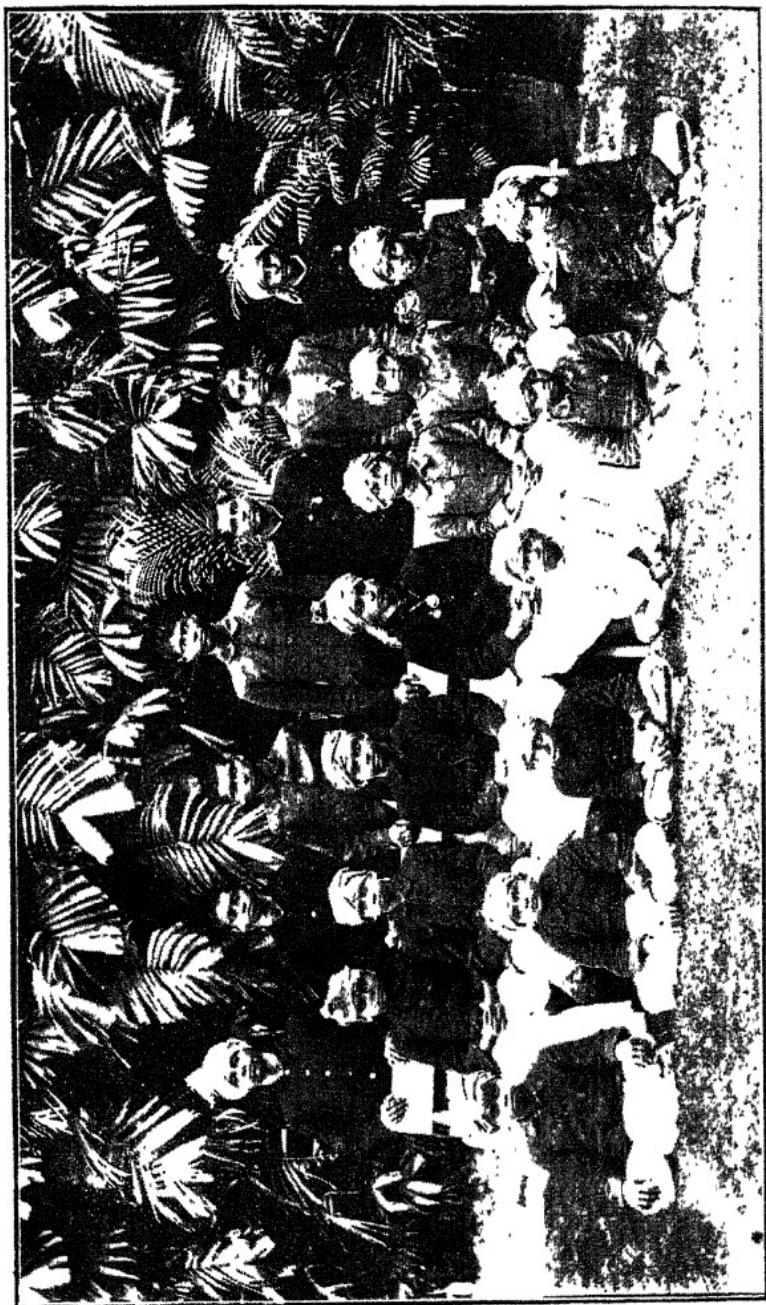
Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares.



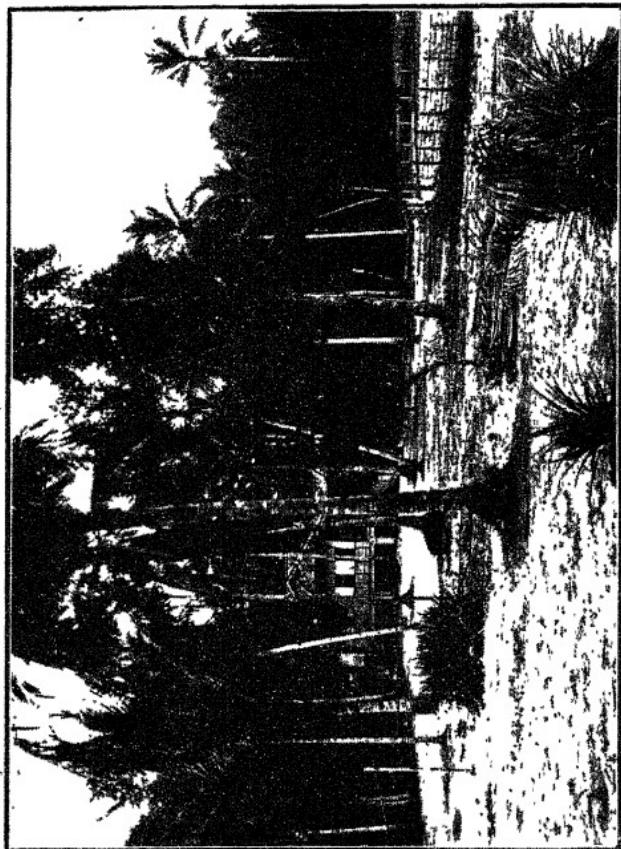
Inmates, Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Calcutta.

Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Deoghar.

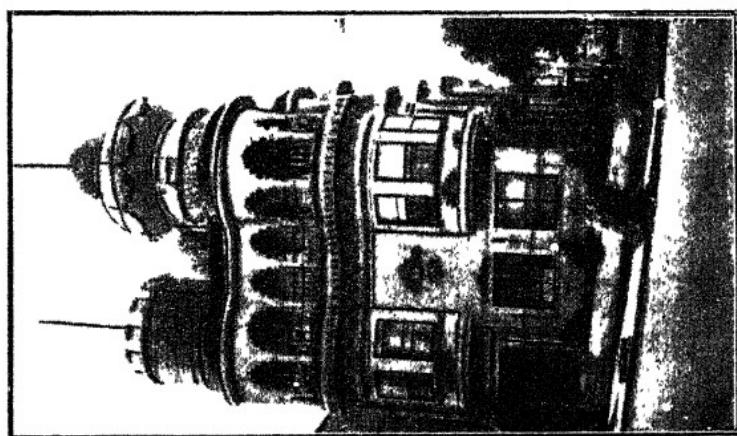




Inmates, Ramakrishna Mission Orphanage, Baranagore



Ramakrishna Ashrama, Kuala Lumpur F.M.S.



The Hindu Temple, San Francisco.

